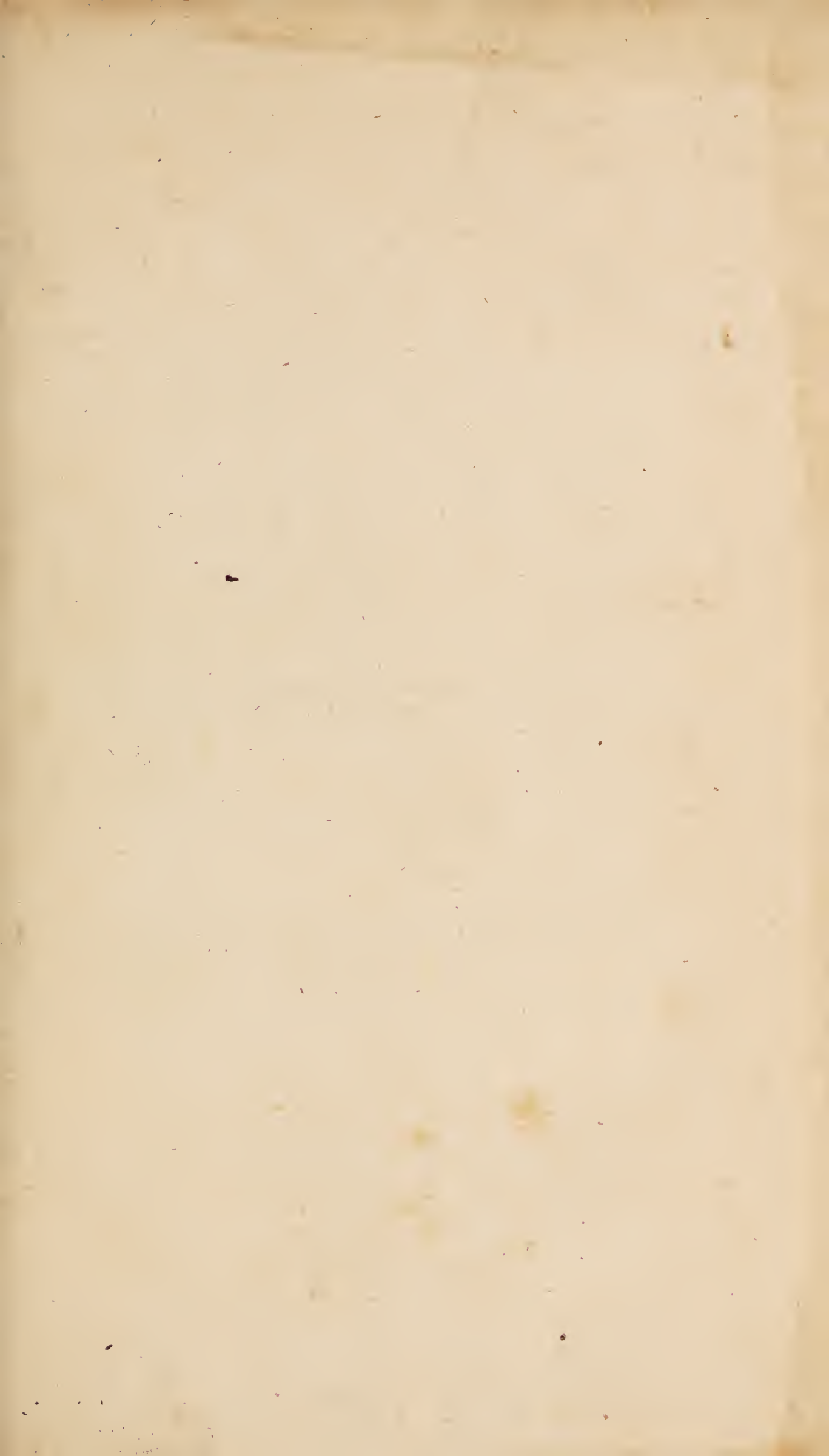




James B. Gallie.

~~AUGIER DE~~ MARIGNY,

François





THE
HISTORY
OF THE
ARABIANS,

Under the GOVERNMENT of the

CALIPH S.



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THE
HISTORY
OF THE
ARABIANS,
Under the GOVERNMENT of the
CALIPH S,

FROM
MAHOMET, their FOUNDER,
TO THE
Death of MOSTAZEM, the fifty-sixth and
last Abassian CALIPH ;

Containing the Space of Six Hundred Thirty-six Years.

With NOTES, Historical, Critical, and Explanatory :
Together with
GENEALOGICAL and CHRONOLOGICAL TABLES;
and a complete INDEX to each Volume.

BY THE
ABBE DE MARIGNY.

Translated from the FRENCH,
With ADDITIONAL NOTES.

In FOUR VOLUMES.

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THE HISTORY OF THE ARABIANS

Under the GOVERNMENT of the

CALIPHS.

ABUL ABBAS SAFFAH.

The TWENTIETH CALIPH.

THE Dynaſty of the Abaſſians WAS ABUL ABBAS.
equally remarkable for its long du- Hegyra 134.
ration, and the eminent men it pro- Ch. ær. 752.
duced ; but more eſpecially, on account of
the great progreſs made by the princes of
that auguſt houſe in the arts and ſciences.
The Abaſſians, in general, had the repu-
tation of being learned men. The Om-
miyans, on the contrary, were for the moſt
part very ignorant, and ſhewed little regard
for literature : They were acquainted with
no book but the Koran, and deemed all
others to be uſeleſs, and even dangerous.

The Abaſſians derived their name from Origin of the
Abbas, Mahomet's uncle. The great Abaſſians.

VOL. III.

B

grand-

ABUL ABBAS.
Hegyra 134.
Ch. ær. 752.

grandson of Abbas, who was also called Mahomet, or Mohammed, was the first that attempted to recover his rights from the Ommiyans, whom he used to call usurpers of the Caliphate. His example was followed by three of his children, to wit, Ibrahim, Abul Abbas, and Abu Giasser, who were successively proclaimed Caliphs, but with more or less solemnity, according to times and circumstances. Ibrahim, as has been observed, was recognized only by a small number of his adherents; insomuch, that tho' as far as in them lay, they bestowed the crown on him, yet he had more the appearance of a candidate for the throne, than an actual sovereign. Abul Abbas, his brother, succeeded him, and was, like Ibrahim, proclaimed in part of Arabia; but he enjoyed no considerable share of power till the death of Merwan; for great part of the Arabians, either thro' fear, or the affection they still entertained for the Ommiyans, dared not openly acknowledge him.

But things assumed a new face immediately after Merwan's death. Abul Abbas was seated on the throne; his brother Giaffer succeeded him, and transmitted the crown to the princes of his race, and they formed the famous Dynasty of the Abassians, whose history I am about to write.

Abul Abbas
is proclaimed
Caliph.

So soon as Abdollah had received certain intelligence of Merwan's defeat in Ægypt, he

he caused Abul Abbas, his nephew, to be proclaimed as lawful Caliph of the Mussulmans. The Ommiyans, and their followers, far from opposing a step which must certainly blast all the hopes of their family, were intent only on taking measures for their own safety. Abdollah was also contriving means to prevent any of them from escaping him; and the better to succeed in his designs, he strove to free them from their fears and apprehensions. He shewed great regard to such as appeared devoted to them; and the more effectually to deceive them, he caused an act of grace to be published, in the Caliph's name, for all the Ommiyans who should appear before him, and take the oaths of allegiance to the new Caliph: He then gave out that they might rest contented; that there would be no enquiries or prosecutions; and that, indeed, there could be no better expedient found out, for putting an end to the divisions which had so long prevailed, to the great detriment of the mussulman state.

ABUL ABBAS.
Hegyra 134.
Ch. ær. 752.

Abdollahtakes
measures to
destroy all the
Ommiyans.

As it was highly advantageous to the Ommiyans, to stay in a country where all their property lay, and in which were all their connections, they, with the greatest readiness, embraced Abdollah's offer, and trusting to his promises, they appeared at the time and place appointed for administering the oaths.

ABUL ABBAS.

Hegyra 134.

Ch. ær. 752.

The treacherous Abdollah, highly pleased with the success of the cruel snare he had laid, appeared at the meeting with a countenance that seemed to promise only peace and union, and gave the Ommiyans a very gracious reception : but whilst he was preparing to tender the oaths, a party of soldiers, appointed for the purpose, drew up behind the Ommiyans, who formed a ring round Abdollah ; and at a signal agreed on, each soldier smote the prince that stood before him with his mace : one of them only escaping the massacre ; who, after a long peregrination, took refuge in Spain, where he formed a new Dynasty of the Ommiyans.

Immediately after this horrid execution, the soldiers put to the sword a great number of Mussulmen, who were known to be devoted to the house of Ommiyah ; and Abdollah having put an end to the slaughter, completed his barbarous cruelty, by the horrid entertainment he had provided.

Cruelty exercised by Abdollah to the Ommiyans.

He caused the bodies of the Ommiyans, who had been knocked down by the soldiers, to be laid close by each other, and covered with boards, over which he ordered carpets to be laid, and upon this kind of floor he gave a grand entertainment to the chief officers of his troops, whom he invited, he said, that they might have the pleasure of hearing the dying groans of the Ommiyans ; many of whom were not killed

led by the blow they had received, but were crushed to death by the weight of those who were present at this shocking banquet.

ABUL ABBAS.

Hegyra 134.

Ch. ær. 752.

Abdollah was not satisfied with this cruel butchery; he vented his rage on the tombs of the Ommiyan Caliphs. He caused their dead bodies to be dugged up, part of which were thrown on dunghills, and others hung on the gallows. The body of Omar the second, surnamed Abdolaziz, was indeed spared. Abdollah entertained a great veneration for the virtues of that Caliph, and ordered his tomb to remain untouched.

Such was the beginning of the reign of Abul Abbas, to whom they gave the first name of Saffah, that is, Shedder of Blood: though that Caliph was not accused of having any share in the cruel massacre of the Ommiyans; the whole blame of it being imputed to Abdollah. However, it is agreed on all hands, that Abul Abbas was indebted to the sanguinary proceedings of that prince, for the great tranquillity which prevailed in the mussulman empire, during the short time he possessed the throne. He disposed of all posts and employments with despotic authority, and no man dared even to complain. In this distribution, Abdollah had the most considerable share; and the new Caliph took every opportunity of convincing him of his gratitude, for having procured for him one of the greatest kingdoms in the universe.

Hegyra 135.

Ch. ær. 753.

ABUL ABBAS.

Hegyra 135.

Ch. ær. 753.

This prince had great reason to expect a long and happy reign. He was then in the prime of life; his constitution was robust, and his conduct very regular. It is related, that as he one day viewed himself in the glass, and observed his easy shape, his beauteous features, and his florid and youthful countenance, he was heard on a sudden to break out into a most sensible reflection upon the instability of those perfections: "Lord," cried he, lifting his eyes to heaven, "I will not say, like Soliman the young Caliph of Damascus, the Son of Abdolmelik, I am the king of youth: but I will beseech thee, O God! only to preserve my life, that I may serve thee; and to bestow on me no other gift but the blessing of health."

It may be collected from this petition, that the Caliph was apprehensive he should not enjoy the blessing he so highly valued. It is related on this subject, that Abul Abbas happening one day to listen to the conversation of his slaves, who were speaking very loud in the anti-chamber; he found the discourse turned upon the imprudence in laying any great stress on youth: one of them, who was about five years younger than his companions, observed, that the difference in point of age was a trifle, and that besides, death seized both young and old without distinction. Though this reflection was nothing more than common, yet

yet it made a deep impressi^{on} upon the young Caliph; and he owned to one of his friends, to whom he usually imparted his most secret thoughts, that the conversation had greatly affected him; that he had ever since had a fatal apprehension of the short time he had to live; and that it seemed as if he had heard the Sovereign dispenser of life and death pronounce the sentence of the approaching period of his reign, and of his days.

ABUL ABBAS.

Hegyra 135.

Ch. ær. 753.

This prince was soon afterwards seized with the small-pox; the idea he had formed that he should die of that distemper, rendered it more dangerous: and, notwithstanding all their attempts to recover him, the young Caliph died, being then no more than eighteen years old. Authors differ in opinion touching his offspring: some say he had a son, named Musa, who had a son, called Issa; and that a party afterwards arose and attempted to set the latter on the throne. Others assert, that Abul Abbas left no children, and that no other disputes happened touching the Caliphate, than those which were caused by Abdollah, when Abu Giafer was proclaimed Caliph in his brother's stead.

Hegyra 136.

Ch. ær. 754.

El Makine relates, that this Caliph was thirty-two years and an half old, and that he left two children; a son, named Mahomet, and a daughter, called Rabéte.

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Hegyra 136.

Ch. ær. 754.

ABU GIAFFER ALMANZOR.

The TWENTY-FIRST CALIPH.

ABU Giaffer, firnamed Almanzor, that is to say Victorious, succeeded his brother in the Caliphate; but he first met with great opposition.

This prince had been appointed conductor of a caravan of pilgrims, who were going to Mecca, and was on the road to that place, when advice was brought him of the death of Abul Abbas. The famous Abu Muslim being then in company with Almanzor, he forthwith sent him to Cufah, with orders to proclaim him in that city, and to tender the oath of fealty to the grantees and people.

But whilst he was taking measures to get possession of a dignity that belonged to him, he was greatly surprised to hear that he had a formidable opponent in Syria, who was resolved to dispute with him for the crown.

Abdollah
forms pretensions to the
Caliphate.

This dangerous rival was Abdollah; the same who had so lately fixed the Abassians on the throne, after having destroyed the house of Ommiyah. That famous captain, who had taken so much pains, and shed so much blood, to secure royal dignity for his nephews, on the death of Abul Abbas, suddenly changed his mind. Blinded

by ambition, he formed pretensions to the supreme dignity, and thinking himself worthy to possess what he had acquired by his valour, and exploits, boldly asserted he had a right to the crown.

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Hegyra 136.

Ch. ær. 754.

Before he began to carry his designs into execution, he attempted to overthrow the opinion that had prevailed ever since the Ommiyans began to reign, touching the succession to the Caliphate. He shewed, that in the beginning the sovereignty was elective, and that it had been always carried by a majority of votes. He agreed, that since the time of Moawiyah the first, the succession had been hereditary; but his right could not be thereby affected: for though he should admit the rule, (which however he had many of the strongest objections to) it must at the same time be observed, that the succession was hereditary only in respect to the Caliph and his issue, and did not extend to the brothers of such as had possessed the throne.

Asserts the Caliphate to be elective.

Abdollah's reasoning was supported by very strong and evident proofs: and, indeed, it could not be pretended that the right of succession had been confined to the direct line, since a father had often left the crown to his brother, preferably to his own son.

These examples were very frequent during the Dynasty of the Ommiyans; and Abdollah easily drew conclusions from them to his

ALMANZOR.
Hegyra 136.
Ch. ær. 754.

his own advantage: he therefore alledged, that as the Caliph had not appointed a successor, the right of election recurred to the people; and that even they, who were friends to an hereditary succession, might well declare in his favour; for as he was of the house of Abbas, in electing him, they would by no means infringe the laws which had been in force ever since the Om-miyans possessed the throne.

But Abdollah did not rest his claim upon this argument alone: he raised forces, and made preparations to support his pretensions in a manner much more efficacious than all the proofs he could possibly have collected. His character, his experience, his bravery, and even his cruelty, concurred in gaining him followers; and many, who were not in the least well-wishers to his cause, chose rather to join him, than to run the risque of his resentment, by taking up arms in favour of his rival.

Abdollah now finding his party strong enough, declared more openly than he had already done. So soon as he received advice that Almanzor his nephew was proclaimed, he declared he would never acknowledge him as Caliph; and he published his reasons for forming such a resolution: but as he had more experience than to waste time in displaying records, and publishing proclamations, he resolved to use those means by which the quarrels of princes are the most effectually decided. He

He therefore began his march at the head of his troops, and taking the road to Mesopotamia, advanced, by hasty marches, as far as Nisiba, in order to attack his nephew, and, if possible, deprive him of the crown.

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Ch. ær. 754.

Abdollah
marches with
an army
against Al-
manzor.

The young Caliph, who was equally sensible of his own want of experience, and of his uncle's great skill and knowledge, was in the utmost consternation, when he heard the fatal news of the revolt. As he had been so lately proclaimed, his thoughts and views were all bent on receiving the honours due to his dignity, and of causing himself to be recognized in the several provinces of his dominions: but it was now become necessary, that speedy measures should be taken to oppose the rebels; a considerable body of forces was therefore raised without delay, and the Caliph conferred the command of the army on an experienced general, to whom he entirely trusted the defence of his crown and dominions.

For this purpose he made choice of Abu Muslim, notwithstanding he did not esteem that general: however, private enmity yielded to reasons of state; and as he knew he had no other officer capable of making head against such a man as Abdollah, he, without hesitation, conferred on him the command of his troops.

Abu Muslim
is appointed
commander of
the Caliph's
army.

Abu Muslim immediately marched out to meet the enemy; but as he was far from being a stranger to Abdollah's great military skill,

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Hegyra 136.
Ch. ær. 754.

skill, and was afraid of trusting the Caliph's fate to the uncertain event of a battle, he resolved to use all means for harraſſing the enemy, without coming to a deciſive action, unleſs he ſhould be compelled to engage, or be able to fight them to great advantage.

He therefore kept a ſtrict eye on all the enemy's motions: he ſoon penetrated their deſigns, and rendered them abortive: he cut off their proviſions, and alſo their convoys of ammunition and money; in conſequence whereof, Abdollah's troops began to deſert; and Abu Muſlim having temporized ſeveral days, during which he occupied ſtrong and well-guarded poſts, he, at laſt, ſallied forth from his intrenchments, and depending upon the advantages he had already procured, he went to attack Abdollah, in ſure hopes of obtaining a complete victory.

He defeats
Abdollah.

And, in fact, Abdollah's troops were cut in pieces. The general himſelf eſcaped from the hands of his enemy with great difficulty, having changed cloaths with one of his ſoldiers: this diſguiſe prevented him from being known, and enabled him to avoid the purſuits of the victors. He took refuge at Baſorah, of which city Soliman his brother was then governor, and ſo effectually concealed himſelf there for ſeveral months, that no perſon, except his moſt intimate friends, knew what was become of him.

The

The defeat of Abdollah afforded great satisfaction to Almanzor; but when he considered the bravery and ambition of that general, and how artful and indefatigable he was in the prosecution of all his schemes, he was filled with disquietude. And after having ineffectually tried various means to find Abdollah out, the Caliph, at last, took a most perfidious step, to prevail on him to discover himself and come to court.

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Almanzor feigned a belief that peace was perfectly established in the mussulman empire; and he caused it to be reported by his courtiers and friends, that as he no longer entertained any fears, touching the conduct and dispositions of his subjects, he was very sorry to find that many of them seemed to dread him, and absented themselves from the court. He particularly named Abdollah, and caused it to be every where given out, that he freely forgave him all that had passed; and that, if he would come to court, he should meet with a gracious reception, and remain there with the utmost safety.

Snare which
Almanzor lays
to draw Ab-
dollah to court.

Affurances so solemn gained credit with Abdollah's friends, who unanimously advised him to go to the Caliph's court. They who visited him in his place of concealment did the like, and counselled him no longer to exasperate the Caliph, by a refusal which would only give rise to stronger suspicions for the future.

Abdollah

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Abdollah had not the least inclination to trust to the Caliph's fair promises. He remembered the base artifice he himself had made use of to destroy the Ommiyans ; and was justly apprehensive, he said, that he might be treated in the same manner as he had dealt with those unfortunate princes : but his friends reminded him, that the situation of affairs was widely different : they remonstrated to him, that the Caliph was indebted to him both for his crown and his life ; since without his assistance, Abul Abbas, and even Almanzor himself, could not have escaped the perquisition of Merwan : that such favours could not be easily forgot : and that it would be highly unjust to suspect the Caliph of double-dealing, at a time he was taking every step in his power to quiet the minds of his subjects, and free them from apprehensions they could no longer justly entertain.

The friends of Abdollah were so importunate with him, that at last he yielded to their intreaties, and consented to go to the Caliph. He was received with all possible marks of the most sincere friendship. An apartment was provided for him in the palace, suitable to his birth, and the rank he held at court. Almanzor often conferred with him, and the courtiers treated him with the utmost deference : all things conspired to persuade Abdollah, that he had injured his nephew in suspecting him of perfidious dealing ; and in this asylum he enjoyed

joyed a repose to which he was a stranger, whilst ambition had gained the mastery over his mind.

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But the scene was soon changed. Abdollah had scarce been a week at court, when, by a fatal accident, he perished, together with a great number of his friends, who, by the Caliph's permission, abode with him. The floor of the chamber, where they were sitting, fell in, and they were all crushed to death by the ruins. It is asserted, that the Caliph was the author of this event; and that he had purposely caused the floor to be so prepared, that it might be made to fall without the least difficulty.

Death of Abdollah.

It may be matter of wonder, why the Caliph did not cause Abdollah to be stabbed, rather than to use so much artifice in depriving him of his life; but it is said, Almanzor had taken an oath that he would never attempt to destroy him either by sword or poison, and thought by that mean subterfuge to save his oath: besides, he presumed, by the measures he had taken, that the death of Abdollah would be attributed to an unlucky accident, and by no means to a premeditated design.

After all, Abdollah was very little regretted. His base conduct, in respect to the Ommyans, was so deeply imprinted in the minds of the Mussulmen, that they felt not the least compassion for a prince, who, though he was a man of the greatest abilities,

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ties, was more remarkable for his cruelties, than for his gallant atchievements. If this fact alone could have been laid to Almanzor's charge, he might, in some measure, have been justified, for putting to death a man who had attempted to deprive him of his crown; but his conduct to Abu Muslim, to whom he was indebted for the defeat of his enemies, was totally inexcusable, and fixed on him an indelible character of perfidy and cruelty.

Almanzor hated Abu Muslim, as we have already observed; but the cause of his hatred was far from being of importance enough to remain so long on his mind: his great enmity arose on the following occasion:

Cause of Almanzor's hatred to Abu Muslim.

Some time after the elevation of Abul Abbas to the mussulman throne, Abu Muslim set out with a grand retinue to perform the pilgrimage to Mecca. When he arrived at Chaldea, he left the high road, to go and pay his duty to the Caliph: after a short stay at the court he continued his journey; but before he departed, he desired Abul Abbas to appoint him Mirage, that is to say, Conductor of the caravan. Almanzor, who was then with his brother, and who had entertained a jealousy of Abu Muslim, on account of the high reputation he had gained at the head of the troops, prevailed on the Caliph to deny that general's request: he asked the same employment for himself, and it was immediately granted to him.

Abu

Abu Muslim was piqued at the refusal : ALMANZOR.
 he let drop some harsh expressions, and suddenly left the court. Hegyra 136.
Ch. ær. 754. Almanzor also soon departed, to perform the office of Mirage, and was amazed at sight of the great state-liness of Abu Muslim's train. He had two hundred camels loaded with provisions of all kinds, and twice a-day he entertained at his table the chief pilgrims of the caravan. Besides the expence he was at in making these entertainments, he also gave valuable presents to his guests. Almanzor was far from being in a condition of making such a figure ; besides, if he had been able, his naturally avaritious temper would have prevented him. He found himself greatly eclipsed by the magnificent appearance of Abu Muslim. The favourites of that prince contributed, by their base and flattering insinuations, to imbitter his mind against the general ; and at last he resolved to destroy the man whose open and generous conduct was a tacit reflection upon his own behaviour.

However, he concealed his design ; and at the time he was to be proclaimed Caliph, he chose Abu Muslim to be his messenger for that purpose. Shortly after this (as the reader may already have observed) Almanzor gave him the command of the forces he sent out against Abdollah, who designed to deprive him of the crown.

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 Hegyra 136.
 Ch. ar. 754.
 Almanzor's
 avarice.

It has been already shewn, that Abu Muslim behaved so prudently, as to gain greater advantages over the enemy than could be expected. The general having forthwith dispatched an express to the Caliph, with an account of the victory, that prince, instead of testifying his gratitude, took a step which was equally mortifying to the general, and dishonourable to himself.

His extreme avarice made him forget the great service Abu Muslim had just done him; and having no more to fear from an enemy whose troops were now cut in pieces, he cast an eye on the plunder, which he knew must be very valuable, as Abdollah, and each of the general officers of his army, were provided with rich armour, and a very costly field-equipage.

Almanzor being eager to know what the spoil of the enemy might amount to, sent a commissary to the field of battle, to take an exact inventory of all the valuable things which were taken there.

Abu Muslim, who had a great and generous soul, could not keep his temper when the commissary acquainted him with his orders. “I have hitherto,” said he, “given so fair an account to the Caliph of the many thousand men I have put to the edge of the sword in his service, that I did not think he would have questioned my honesty in regard to the booty. I have therefore the
 highest

highest reason to complain of his distrust ; ALMANZOR.
but glory is my sole aim, and money, I find, Hegyra 136.
is his." Ch. ær. 754.

After this answer Abu Muslim quitted Abu Muslim
the service, and refused to march into is disgusted
Egypt and Syria, whither the Caliph com- and quits the
manded him to go, to quell some commo- service.
tions that had happened there. He retired
to his government, where he kept every
thing very quiet. If he had been minded
to cause a revolt, he was so beloved by the
foldiery, and even by the people under his
government, that he had it in his power to
raise great disturbances, to the Caliph's un-
easiness ; but he could not be reproached
with the making any such attempts : he was,
however, too free a speaker, and never men-
tioned the Caliph or his court but in terms
of the utmost contempt.

The Caliph, who was extremely vindic- Means used
tive, had been long contriving the means to by the Caliph
destroy that general ; but considering that to ensnare
it would be a difficult matter openly to at- him.
tack an officer so highly esteemed, he had
recourse to a most shameful method. He
seemed to have laid aside all thoughts of the
dispute between him and Abu Muslim. He
even declared he was sorry he had issued
such orders, touching the plunder taken at
the time of Abdollah's defeat. He owned
that his behaviour on that occasion was im-
prudent and inconsiderate, and intreated
Abu Muslim to forget all that was passed.

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He assured him of his esteem, friendship, and gratitude, and desired he would forthwith come to court, to receive a publick proof of the good opinion he entertained of him.

That this horrid piece of treachery might not fail of success, some servile courtiers (such as are always ready to administer to the passions or vices of their sovereign) were employed. They went to Abu Muslim, and represented to him that it was unbecoming in him so obstinately to refuse going to court; that the Caliph no longer entertained any ill thoughts of him; and that he was very desirous of seeing him, that he might give him a proof of his gratitude, for the great services he had done the state.

These remonstrances were so often and so artfully urged by men versed in perfidy and treachery, that at last the brave Abu Muslim could no longer avoid complying with their advice. He therefore went to court, and was received by Almanzor and his courtiers with all the civility and respect that could be paid to a man in the highest favour. Almanzor even prevailed on himself to converse with him several times in private, with so great a shew of frankness and cordiality, as was sufficient to put an end to every suspicion.

Abu Muslim therefore passed his days at Almanzor's court with great tranquillity: he began to think he had long entertained too unfavourable an opinion of that prince; he

he saw him constantly, and did not entertain the least doubt of his own safety.

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Hegyra 136.

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At last the fatal day arrived, in which the Caliph resolved to compleat his treachery. He conversed with the general longer than usual ; and at an appointed signal, four villains, whom Almanzor had hired to execute his base design, rushed into the apartment, and falling on Abu Muslim gave him several wounds, of which he died almost on the spot.

The Caliph causes Abu Muslim to be treacherously murdered.

Such was the unhappy end of that illustrious benefactor to the Abassians, and, in particular, to the treacherous Almanzor, to whom he had done the most signal service.

This base prince was not satisfied with having assassinated that great man ; he committed outrages on his dead body ; he caused it to be kept several days in the room where the murder was committed, that he might have the pleasure of seeing it, and shewing it to his courtiers ; and he had the assurance to say, He did not think himself really a sovereign till he was rid of that general.

The death of Abu Muslim occasioned great commotions, which caused the Caliph much disquiet. A Persian called Sinam, of Nisabour, who knew what immense riches that general possessed in Chorasan, seized his treasures, and made use of part of the money to raise a revolt in that province against the Caliph.

Hegyra 137.

Ch. ær. 755.

Revolt in Chorasan, which is soon ended.

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Almanzor conferred the command of his troops on a captain named Giamhour, and ordered him to march without delay into Chorasan, to fight the rebels. This expedition proved very successful; Sinam was defeated in a single action, and his troops being dispersed, the rebellion was soon at an end.

The Caliph, through avarice, committed the same fault in this juncture as he had done the preceding year, when Abu Muslim gained a victory over Abdollah's army; he sent one of his officers to take an account of the booty, that the general might not apply any part of it to his own use.

Giamhour was greatly offended at so mean an action, and he easily prevailed on his soldiers to join in his resentment, especially when he informed them that it was his intention to have divided all the spoils of the vanquished amongst them. Tumultuous cries were heard on a sudden in the army; they were enraged against the Caliph, and his sordid avarice was the subject-matter of the complaints and invectives of the soldiers.

Giamhour is
proclaimed
sovereign of
Chorasan.

Giamhour finding how they were disposed, added fuel to their resentment; by means of which they soon became disgusted with the service of a prince who was so wedded to his own interest, that he would not reward either valour or conduct. When he thought him-
self

self sure of the troops he threw off the ALMANZOR.
 masque, caused himself to be proclaimed Hegyra 137.
 sovereign of the province, and resolved to Ch. ær. 755.
 keep possession of it by force of arms.

This new revolt spread an alarm in the Caliph's court: it was therefore become necessary to make a speedy levy of troops, and to put at their head a general capable of subduing the rebels. Almanzor accordingly made choice of Mahomet ebn Ashar, who immediately began his march for Chorasan with a numerous army, and went in quest of the enemy.

As Giamhour had parties out on the discovery, he soon received intelligence of the Hegyra 138.
 march of the Caliph's army; and as he knew Ch. ær. 756.
 how greatly superior they were to his own Mahomet pur-
 troops, he did not think fit to wait for them sués and de-
 in Chorasan: he therefore began his march feats him.
 with great precipitation, and retired towards Ispahan, where he fortified himself, and waited for Mahomet's arrival.

That general soon came in sight, and pressed Giamhour so closely, that he could not maintain his post, and retired to Aderbijan. Mahomet so warmly pursued him, that he was at last forced to come to an action, in which the Caliph's troops had all the advantage. Giamhour's forces were cut in pieces, and he himself would have perished in the battle, if he had not, by a precipitate flight, avoided Mahomet's pursuit.

This rebellion being thus ended, in a few Hegyra 144.
 years after disturbances happened of a diffe- Ch. ær. 762.

ALMANZOR.
Hegyra 144.
Ch. ær. 762.

rent kind : they were occasioned by a sect called Ravendians, from the name of Abdollahebn Ravend, the stock of the Ravendians, who were always zealously devoted to the Abassians.

Rise of the
Ravendians.

But notwithstanding their attachment to that party, they raised great disturbances in the province of Chorasan, of which they were natives. Abdollah had some particular disputes with Abu Muslim, and arms were made use of for the decision of them. Abdollah was overcome, and a great number of his adherents, as also many of his relations, lost their lives on that occasion.

But some of them escaping, they formed a sect, and began to teach the Metempsychosis,* which was one of the chief points of their doctrine. Though this sect were so great friends to the house of Abbas, Almanzor was far from approving their proceedings, being apprehensive that the great eagerness and zeal with which they spread their dogmas, would one day occasion them openly to revolt.

However, they could not be accused of plotting against the Caliph ; on the contrary they were blame-worthy only for paying to that prince honours, which, according to the law of Mahomet, were due to the Deity alone. They came in crowds to Hashemia, where Almanzor usually resided ; and they went round the Caliph's palace with the same ceremonies as the Mussulmans were

* Transmigration of souls from one body to another.

wont to observe in compassing the temple of ALMANZOR.
Mecca.

The Caliph, not knowing what to think of Hegyra 144.
Ch. ær. 762. the proceedings of these enthusiasts, sent The Caliph prohibits the
practice of this
sect. them an order to cease their processions, and not to make so ill an use of a ceremony, which could be properly performed only at the Caabah. The Ravendians paid little regard to the prohibition, and still continued the practice.

Almanzor seeing their obstinacy, soon resolved to remedy the abuse, and forthwith They rise up in
arms, and are
dispersed. caused about one hundred of those enthusiasts to be arrested. This blow stunned them; but they soon came to themselves, took up arms, ran to the prisons, broke open the doors, set their friends at liberty, and then went and invested the palace.

The Caliph, enraged at their insolence, mounted his horse, and putting himself at the head of his guards, and the officers of his household, he advanced against the Ravendians, supposing they would disperse at his presence: but he had the mortification to be disappointed; his subjects attacked him, and that so briskly, that he had like to have fallen a sacrifice to their fury. Happily he was relieved in time. The troops withdrew him from the battle, and then fell furiously on those fanaticks, whom they drove out of the city, after having routed, and killed a great number of them.

This

ALMANZOR.

Hegyra 144.

Ch. ær. 762.

The Caliph
pardons Maan.

This event produced a pardon for an officer of distinction, named Maan, who had a long time concealed himself to avoid being seized by the Abassians. This officer was strongly devoted to the Ommiyans, and had signalized his valour and capacity in the different employments they had intrusted him with. The Abassians having attained the throne, he was near losing his life amongst the other Ommiyans, who were massacred by order of Abdollah, after the death of Merwan; but he had the good fortune to save himself by lying hid till that time in the house of one of his relations. The revolt of the Ravendians seeming to him a fair opportunity that offered for his reconciliation with the Abassians, he ran to the palace, and joining those that were fighting in defence of Almanzor, he performed wondrous feats of valour, which saved the life of that prince, who declared to him on the spot that he forgave him, and promised he would restore him to his estate.

The Caliph
forms a reso-
lution of
building the
city of Bagdat.

Hegyra 145.

Ch. ær. 763.

The Caliph took a dislike to Hashemia, on account of the insult he had received in that city, and resolved no longer to make it the place of his residence. He formed a resolution of founding a city, for the situation of which he pitched upon a very large spot of ground near the Tygris, where the city of Seleucia formerly stood.

Almanzor

Almanzor riding one day by the side of ALMANZOR. that river with his courtiers, at the time he Hegyra 145. was seeking out a place convenient for his Ch. ær. 763. design, was so pleased with the beauty of How he discovers that he the country, that he resolved to make choice was to be the of it for his purpose. Whilst he was dis- founder. coursing of the matter with the officers that attended him, one of them leaving the company happened to meet with a hermit, whose cell was in the neighbourhood: the officer having entered into conversation with the anchoret, mentioned to him the Caliph's design. The hermit answered, That there was, indeed, a tradition in the country, that a city would one day be built on the spot he mentioned; but it was to be performed by a man called Moclas, a name very different from those of Giaffer and Almanzor, which the Caliph bore.

The officer returning to Almanzor, related the conversation that had passed between him and the hermit. The Caliph had no sooner heard the word Moclas, than he alighted from his horse, fell prostrate on the ground, and returned thanks to God that he had chosen him as an instrument to execute his will. The amazed courtiers impatiently waited for an explanation of this great mystery, which the Caliph soon gave them in the following manner:

“ During the Caliphate of the Ommyyans,” said he, “ my brothers and I, being very young, and having but a slender income,

ALMANZOR. come, were forced to live in the country, Hegyra 145. where each of us was caterer in his turn. Ch. ær. 763. Being once unable to buy provisions for my appointed day for want of money, I stole a bracelet from my nurse, and pledged it to supply my want; the woman made a great noise about her loss, and by dint of searching and enquiry, she fixed the theft on me. In the heat of her passion she was not sparing of abusive language, and amongst other names she called me Moclas (which was the name of a noted robber of that time;) and, during the rest of her life, she never called me by any other name. I therefore see plainly that heaven has destined me to the undertaking in question, which I will execute in this place, for it is evident that God himself has so ordained."

Almanzor drew the first lines of the plan of that city round a hill, the summit of which he reserved to build his own palace thereon: he then ordered the works to be begun, and they were carried on with the utmost expedition; but they were several times forced to suspend the building, that they might attend to matters of greater moment.

Hegyra 146. Mahomet, and Ibrahim, both of them Ch. ær. 764. grandsons of Hasan, and great grandsons to Ali, took up arms against Almanzor, and strove to deprive him of the Caliphate. Domestic broils also arose, which gave the Caliph some trouble before he could pacify

cify them. The Caliph happily put an end ALMANZOR.
to all these diffensions, and even extended Hegyra 146.
his conquests to Armenia, Cicilia, and Cap- Ch. ær. 764.
padocia, on account of which advantages
they gave him the glorious surname of Al-
manzor, that is to say, Victorious.

So soon as this prince had settled the peace Hegyra 150.
of his dominions, he wholly applied him- Ch. ær. 768.
self to the finishing his new city, and had He fixes his
the satisfaction to complete it after several residence at
years continual labour. He immediately Bagdat.
went to reside there, and gave it the name
of Dar-al-Salam, * that is to say, The City
of Peace, perhaps, because Jerusalem was
so called; or for that, when he dwelt there,
the whole mussulman empire enjoyed a pro-
found peace.

What pleasure soever the Caliph at first A foresight of
took in Bagdat, which was the work of his his death
own hands, he was soon weary of it, or makes him
rather he was seized with a melancholy, melancholy.
which gave him an equal disgust to every
object that offered itself to his view. Histo-
rians say, that this distemper was occasioned
by an impresson made on his mind by some
Arabian verses which he saw written on a
wall. Authors relate them variously : some
say they were to the following effect :
“ O Giaffer ! thy days are at an end ; the

* El Makine relates, that the city was called by Almanzor Medina-tol-Salam, which signifies also the City of Peace ; but that it was afterwards called Bagdat, from the name of an hermit, whose cell was in the meadow where that city was built.

ALMANZOR.

Hegyra 150.

Ch. ar. 768.

hour of thy death is come; the order of God, which is irrevocable, is gone forth." Others say, they only contained these general maxims: "The riches of this world are not given, but lent to us: let no man therefore trust in them, nor make his boast of them; for whosoever placeth his heart thereon, shall be covered with shame and confusion, on the day when he shall be required to render an account to him that gave them.

Hegyra 158.

Ch. ar. 775.

The melancholy reflections he made on reading these verses, sunk his spirits, and filled him with disquietude: every thing grew insupportable to him, and though he went from place to place, and often varied the scene, in hopes of dispelling his care and finding rest, yet he could get none. He then vowed a pilgrimage to Mecca, in hopes that his health might be restored by the performance of so religious a vow.

He performs
a pilgrimage
to Mecca.

He set out on his journey with a numerous train: Mahadi, or Almohdi his son, went to accompany him part of the way: but the Caliph had scarce travelled a few leagues, e'er the journey itself furnished him with fresh cause of melancholy. He said it was the last he should ever make. He was on the point of returning; but he suddenly changed his mind, and resolved to go on, saying he undertook it only in hopes that God would extend his mercy to him.

He

He stopped on the road at a place called ALMANZOR. Abdawih, where he continued with his whole Hegyra 158. train. Abulfaragius relates, that the Ca- Ch. ar. 775. liph, walking one night on a terrace to take the air, saw a light in the western part of the hemisphere, which passed over a vast space of the heavens, and left behind it a gleam which was visible till day-break.

Terrified at this phænomenon, his gloomy vapours rose to a higher pitch: he looked on it as a warning from heaven of his approaching end, and instantly caused his son to be called, that he might take leave of him. Mahadi having soon appeared before him, Almanzor gave him this singular exhortation :

“ I exhort you,” said he, “ to honour His exhortations to his son. your parents, who, as it were, partake of the lustre of your dignity, of which they are the support, and the glory whereof reflects upon you———but I believe you will not do it.

“ Be careful of the education of your children ; treat them with mildness ; strive to get a numerous offspring, for they may prove serviceable to you, or comfort you in the days of adversity ; but I believe you will not do it.

“ Do not attempt to build in the western part of Bagdat, for you are not the person appointed for that undertaking, and besides you will not be able to finish it ; and yet I believe you will do it.

“ Suffer

ALMANZOR.

Hegyra 158.

Ch. ær. 775.

“ Suffer not your wives to intermeddle in state-affairs, for nothing is more dangerous ; and yet I believe you will do it.”

After this conversation, Almanzor dismissed his son, and ordered him to go to Bagdat, that he might be ready to take proper measures, in case his malady should put a period to his life.

He dies.

The Caliph being a little recovered by some days rest, continued his journey, and came to a place called the Wells of Maimoun, distant some leagues from Mecca. There he was seized with a dysentery, which soon put an end to his life. His body was carried to Mecca, and buried with the face bare, to shew that he died before he fulfilled the vow he had made of performing a pilgrimage to that city.

His character.

He is described by historians to have been well shaped, of a lean visage, and a thin beard. He was easy of access, and familiar in private conversation, but very grave and reserved when he appeared in publick, invested with the imperial robes.

After all, he was restless, suspicious, a dissembler, and even cruel in punishing his enemies ; but his ruling passion was avarice, and it was so insatiable, as to render him odious to great part of his subjects. The Cufians, amongst whom he had lived many years, gave him the surname of Douanek, that is to say, Father of Farthings, because he laid a tax of a farthing a head, in order
to

to dig the ditches of the city of Bagdat. MAHADI. Hegyra 158. Ch. ær. 775.
 El Makine relates, that they found in his treasury after his death six hundred millions of drachmas, and twenty-four millions of gold.

M A H A D I.

The TWENTY-SECOND CALIPH.

MAHADI, the son of Abu Giaffer Almanzor, was proclaimed Caliph at Bagdat, immediately after the news of his father's death was made publick. He was the twenty-second that possessed the throne after Mahomet, and the third of the Dynasty of the Abassians.

The beginning of his reign was disturbed by some enthusiasts, who setting up for prophets, preached a new doctrine, and gained a great number of proselytes, especially amongst the common people, who are always fond of novelties. Mahadi soon put an end to this budding faction: he sent out a body of troops, who easily dispersed the mutineers. One of their chiefs, named Busa, having been taken, was brought to Bagdat; the Caliph condemned him to be hanged, and no more was heard of his followers. Mahadi disperses certain enthusiasts.

So soon as he had restored a calm to his dominions, he took care that justice should be administred to his people, of which he Hegyra 159. Ch. ær. 776.

MAHADI.

Aets of clemency and generosity in the new Caliph.

himself set an example in restoring considerable sums, which his father had extorted from many private persons. He also released from prison a great number of unhappy wretches, who had been confined for not paying the exorbitant taxes which Almanzor had imposed on them. In a word, so noble and generous was his disposition, that his conduct was the very reverse of his father's behaviour; and he seemed to take a pleasure, in freely dealing out the treasures which Almanzor had so basely accumulated.

Hegyra 160.

Ch. ær. 777.

He obliges the Greeks to sue for peace, and pay tribute.

Mahadi also carried on a war against the Greeks at a great expence; but he received ample amends, when, after having obtained several victories over them, they sued for peace, and complied with terms much more advantageous to him than he could have expected.

That prince did not personally command his own troops in the war he waged with the Greeks: he gave the chief conduct of them to his second son named Haroun al Rashid, and he had no reason to repent his choice. The young prince defeated the enemy in several actions, and made himself master of many strong places. He was even preparing to march into the very heart of the empire, when the empress Irene sued for peace.

Hegyra 165.

Ch. ær. 781.

That princess, so famous for her beauty and ambition, then governed the eastern empire

empire as guardian to Constantine her son, MAHADI.
 who was only ten years old. That she Hegyra 165.
 might be enabled duly to discharge so impor- Ch. ær. 781.
 tant a trust, she was induced to make offers
 of peace to the Caliph, and it was conclu-
 ded, in consideration of a yearly tribute of
 sixty thousand golden crowns. By that
 means the princess was freed from the dis-
 quietude she felt at the continual ravages of
 the Mussulmen, who made inroads to the
 very gates of Constantinople.

This important affair was no sooner con- Hakem sets
 cluded, than rumours prevailed of certain up for a pro-
 intestine divisions, occasioned by the enthu- phet, and
 siasm of a Mussulman, called Hakem, and causes an in-
 surnamed Burkai, from the Arabic word surrection in
 Burka, which signifies a Masque; Hakem Chorasan.
 wearing one of silver, to hide the deformity of
 his face, which was occasioned by a wound
 he received in battle.

Hakem pretended to be inspired, and Hegyra 166.
 gained followers, who ridiculously asserted, Ch. ær. 782.
 that the impostor wore a masque only to
 prevent men's eyes from being dazzled by
 the luminous rays that issued from his coun-
 tenance.

His party became soon so strong in Cho- The Caliph's
 rasan, that he made himself master of some troops invest
 considerable places; and there were no other him in his
 means of reducing him to obedience, but place of re-
 by sending out a body of troops to stop his fuge.
 progress. Burkai valorously stood the first
 attack that was made on him; but when he

MAHADI.

Hegyra 166.

Ch. ær. 782.

found reinforcements were sent against him, he began to provide for his safety: he therefore went and shut himself up in a town, which was so strong, on account of its natural situation, that he concluded his enemies would have no inclination to attack him there.

But the impostor was soon invested by the Caliph's troops, who had orders to take him at all hazards. As the place had no defence but its situation, and as the few troops Burkai had then with him, could not much interrupt the workmen, the operations of the siege were carried on with great vivacity; and that rebel had soon nothing left to determine, but the kind of death he would chuse to die. Hakem reflecting, that if he was taken alive by the enemy, he could not avoid an ignominious death, chose rather to destroy himself and all his followers, but in such a manner as should raise the reputation of his imposture.

He destroys
himself and all
his followers.

He caused deep ditches to be digged, which he filled with quick lime, and which he pretended was a trap he had contrived to catch the enemy. He, at the same time, filled a large tub with spirits of wine, and other such combustible liquors, which he persuaded them was another stratagem for the same purpose. Whilst Burkai's men were employed in the work, he poisoned all the wine that was designed for their drink; and when they had executed his orders, he advised them to take large draughts of wine,

that they might act with more spirit in an attack, which he told them they should make the next morning. They accordingly drank heartily of the liquor, and as the poison was strong, they all died the same day.

MAHADI.
Hegyra 166.
Ch. ær. 782.

So soon as they were dead, Burkai drew them himself to the ditch filled with lime, and throwing them in, the bodies of those unhappy wretches were entirely consumed. That done, he set fire to the liquors with which he had filled the tub, and threw himself therein headlong.

The next day, which was appointed for the assault, the besiegers were greatly amazed to see no person appear on the ramparts. They now looked on Burkai to be a great magician, and were afraid that by means of his art, he would destroy them all without taking the trouble of making a defence.

This strange notion had made such an impression upon their minds, that they deliberated a long time, whether they should accept the invitation of a woman who called aloud to them from the top of the battlements, that they might boldly approach the place, for there was no person left to defend it, and that she would open the gates to them.

The woman opened the gates, and the besiegers entered the place, but they were under continual apprehensions of a surprise. The general, who was astonished not to find a single person, asked the woman

MAHADI.

Hegyra 166.

Ch. ær. 782.

the cause, and she informed him of the fearful end, both of the rebel and his followers. She added, that though she was Burkai's mistress, she had escaped death only by concealing herself the moment after he had imparted his design to her. Thus ended Hakem's revolt ; and the province of Chorasan, which seemed inclined to assist him, soon returned to their duty.

His followers
continue to
maintain his
doctrine.

But the death of that impostor did not absolutely destroy his reputation amongst those he had deluded. They affirmed, that neither he nor any of his followers were dead, and that they would soon return again. It was to no purpose to object to them the testimony of their patriarch's concubine, who knew the whole transaction : they replied, she had been bribed to give such an account of the end of Burkai and his adherents. They therefore began to disperse themselves abroad, and make proselytes ; but as they had not a person at their head capable of conducting them, their party insensibly declined, and at last came to nothing. This sect professed no other doctrine than the Metempsychosis, which had been already taught by the Ravendians. The former were at first indeed a little more successful, and their success was owing to the artifice of Burkai, who possibly being master of some secrets in natural philosophy, might dexterously make use of them, to persuade

persuade his followers that he held a correspondence with heaven.

MAHADI.

Hegyra 167.

Ch. ær. 783.

About this time Mahadi, after his father's example, was desirous of going the pilgrimage to Mecca, and he performed it, but with much greater pomp than devotion; for it is computed that he expended in the journey more than six millions of gold. He was accompanied by a numerous train, whom he treated all the way with the utmost luxury and magnificence. He carried with him an immense quantity of provisions, and amongst the rest were a great number of camels loaded only with pounded snow, which used to cool the fruit and liquors designed for the Caliph's use.

The Caliph goes on a pilgrimage to Mecca.

He lived at Mecca in a much more expensive manner than any of the Caliphs his predecessors had presumed to do; however, he very punctually performed all religious duties, and several times officiated in the mosque with great appearance of devotion. The publick prayers were commonly followed by a considerable largess to the people; infomuch that there was always a very large congregation, when it was known he would do the duty of Imam.

It is related, that one day when the people were eagerly striving to obtain a share of his bounty, he observed, that Manzor Hagiani his vizir, continued to pray with great fervency. Mahadi, interrupting him, said, "And why do not you ask for your share?"

Disinterestedness of Manzor Hagiani.

MAHADI.

Hegyra 167.

Ch. ær. 783.

“ I should be highly to blame,” answered that pious Mussulman, “ if in the house of God I should prefer any petition save to him alone, or should desire any thing but God.”

He causes the mosques of Mecca and Medina to be adorned and improved.

Mahadi, having performed all the accustomed rites and ceremonies, was desirous of leaving a memorial of his pilgrimage, by causing a stately entrance to be made to the mosque, the portico of which was not, in his opinion, answerable to the beauties of that edifice.

In a short time he departed and went to Medina, to perform his devotions at the tomb of the prophet. He also caused some ornaments and improvements to be added to the outside of the mosque of that city. There a certain man having presented to Mahadi a slipper, which he asserted had belonged to Mahomet, the Caliph received the gift with great marks of veneration, and caused ten thousand drachmas to be given to the person that brought it; not that the Caliph believed the slipper to be a relick of the prophet, but he prudently judged that he ought not to shew any doubt of a fact, which was so firmly believed at Medina. “ In all probability” said he to one of his favourites, “ Mahomet never saw this slipper; but if I had refused to accept it, the people, who believe it really belonged to Mahomet, would have thought I despised it, and my refusal might have given great cause of offence.”

His care to avoid giving cause of offence to the people.

This

This pilgrimage, performed to places MAHADI. where it may be said Mahometism first lay Hegyra 167. in its cradle, filled the Caliph with truly Ch. ær. 783. pious and devout sentiments; he became more mindful of his duty; and though he was naturally mild and affable, yet those qualities, so excellent in themselves, shone out with a new lustre, when animated by the spirit of religion.

From Medina he went to Cufah, where Hegyra 168. he observed the same conduct, and lived Ch. ær. 784. with the same state as in the other cities where he had resided. In Cufah, in particular, he gave a striking proof of his humane disposition and great complaisance.

Being one day ready to begin prayers in the mosque, an Arabian, one amongst the lowest of the people, came and told him he was desirous of praying with him, but that he had not yet performed his ablution*. The Caliph promised he would not begin the prayers till he had purified himself, and was actually so condescending as to wait till the man had performed the legal washing. Stories of the Caliph's moderation and justice.

Thus he continued till his death to give to his people in general, and in particular to those who visited him, and were about his person, all possible marks of affection and paternal goodness. These sentiments were deeply imprinted on his heart, and

* It is a law amongst the Mussulmen, not to say their prayers till they have washed themselves.

MAHADI.

Hegyra 168.

Ch. ær. 784.

did not consist in bare outward demonstrations, according to the common mode of most of the great men of this world.

It is related on this head, that the Caliph travelling towards his capital, was overtaken by so violent a storm of lightning, that it seemed as if the fire from heaven would have burned up the whole country. Mahadi, moved at the great consternation of the inhabitants, alighted from his horse, and falling on his knees, cried out, "Lord! if it is my life thou requirest, I am ready to submit to thy just chastisement; but spare, I beseech thee, the faithful."

Hegyra 169.

Ch. ær. 785.

On his return to Bagdat, he was constantly employed in promoting the good of the state, and the happiness of his people: in particular, he took care often to change the governors of provinces, to avoid their gaining an undue power in the places under their jurisdiction, which had often caused the oppressed people to throw off all authority, and openly to revolt.

He also never omitted to give frequent audiences, in which all persons were free to make their observations on the government of the state, and the administration of publick justice. He often even called before him magistrates who were accused of corrupt dealings; and, after a due enquiry into the fact, he decreed a punishment proportionable to the nature of the crime, and ordered
full

full satisfaction to be made to the parties MAHADI.
injured.

Hegyra 169.
Ch. ær. 785.

This regard for justice, and the happiness of the people, caused him to be adored through the whole mussulman empire. So great, so humane, so generous a prince, had not for a long time appeared on the mussulman throne. Vows were continually offered to heaven, that it would be pleased to preserve and prolong the life of a sovereign so worthy to wear a crown; but a most fatal event took off the Caliph, when his constitution, his age, and his dispositions, seemed to promise a long and happy reign.

Authors agree that he died in the 169th The Caliph's
year of the Hegyra, aged 42 years; but death.
they differ as to the cause of his death.

Some of them relate, that Mahadi being Different opi-
at Mazabdan, a place at a considerable dis- nions of au-
tance from Bagdat, one of his slaves gave thors concern-
some very fine pears to her companion, who ing the cause
was the Caliph's favourite. She presented of it.
them to that prince, who had no sooner eat
of them than his bowels seemed to be on fire;
after which no remedy could be found to as-
suage his pain, or remove the source of his dis-
order. It was discovered that the pears given
to the young slave were pricked almost im-
perceptibly with a fine needle, which had
been dipped in a very strong poison.

Others say, that Mahadi died in the chace,
which was his favourite diversion. They
relate, that as he was pursuing a stag, which
had

MAHADI.

Hegyra 169.

Ch. ær. 785.

had shewed him great sport, the creature ran into a house, the entrance of which being very low, the prince, who followed the animal full speed, leaned down on his horse's neck, and attempted to enter after the stag ; but in so doing he struck against the lintel of the door, broke his back, and died almost on the spot.

He left two sons, one whereof named Hadi succeeded him ; the other was called Haroun al Rashid. Mahadi had a great love for the latter, who had done him signal service at the head of the mussulman troops in the war against the Greeks. It was doubtless on account of the distinguished qualities of this young prince, that the Caliph proposed to resign the crown to him ; but Haroun would not consent to it ; inso-much that Mahadi appointed his eldest son to be his successor ; and by the writing drawn up for that purpose, it was directed, that after Hadi the crown should come to Haroun, and should not descend to the children of his eldest son.

Mahadi was far from leaving his exchequer so full as he found it at the death of his father Almanzor. By his magnificence, his liberality, and, it may even be said, by his profuseness, he, in a short time, squandered away the immense sums which came to his possession.

His funeral was so far from being performed with a pomp and ceremony suitable

to

to his quality, that, on the contrary, it was MAHADI. plain enough for the meanest of his subjects. He was buried near the place where he died; his grave was made under a tree, where he had often rested himself when he hunted in those parts. Hegyra 169.
Ch. ær. 785.

El Makine gives us in few words a surprising account of the meanness of this Caliph's funeral. "They could find no bier," said he, "to carry him to the ground; they therefore carried him on a door, and buried him at the foot of a walnut tree, under which he was used to sit."

During his reign, in the 164th year of the Hegyra, happened a most extraordinary phenomenon: the sun, some time after his rising, seemed all on a sudden to lose his light, without any eclipse, or cloud appearing in the air, and a horrid darkness ensued, which lasted till about noon.

Before I leave Mahadi, I shall mention some facts, which manifest the good disposition of that prince: they are extracted from an Arabian author, who does not say to what particular part of his life they have relation.

The Caliph one day reprimanding an officer, asked him "When he would have done committing faults?" The officer answered, "So long as God shall preserve your life for our good, it will belong to us to commit faults, and to you to pardon them."

Another

MAHADI.

Hegyra 169.

Ch. ar. 785.

Another time that prince having lost his company when he was hunting, and being pressed with hunger and thirst, and greatly fatigued, he entered the cottage of an Arabian peasant, which he found in his way, and asked him for something to eat and drink. The Arab set before him a brown loaf and a little milk ; and Mahadi desiring to know if he could give him nothing better, the peasant went forthwith and fetched him a pitcher of wine, of which the Caliph took one or two draughts.

Mahadi then asked, if he knew him? The Arab answered no. “ I am,” said the prince, “ one of the chief lords of the Caliph’s court.” He then drank again, and asked the peasant the same question : the Arab answered that he had just told him. “ Well,” replied Mahadi, “ but I am a greater man than I said I was ;” and thereupon he took another draught, and repeated the question. The Arabian grew angry, and replied, “ He thought he had sufficiently explained himself on that subject. Well,” said the prince, “ but I have not told you all ; I am the Caliph, before whom all men fall prostrate.”

At these words the Arab, instead of falling down on his face, hastily took up his pitcher, and carried it away. The Caliph in amaze, asked him why he did so ? “ Why,” said the peasant, “ if you had drank once more, I should have feared you would have
been

HADI.

Hegyra 169.

Ch. ær. 785.

a considerable party in Medina, and was publickly proclaimed Caliph by the inhabitants of that city. He went thence to Mecca, where he endeavoured to establish his authority; but he met with unexpected difficulties, on account of the great number of Abassians who were at Mecca on a pilgrimage. However, Housain at last procured himself to be recognized, and immediately treated with the utmost rigour all such as he discovered to have opposed him; but his resentment fell chiefly on the Abassians, of whom he caused all such to be massacred as he could get into his power.

The Caliph
puts an end
to the revolt.

This revolt was soon ended, by means of the troops which the Caliph sent into Arabia. Housain's party was defeated in two or three actions; all such as were taken prisoners under arms, were put to the edge of the sword, and all such as were known to be adherents to the Aliens, were beheaded.

Housain is put
to death.

It is said that Housain got out of the hands of the victorious enemy, and fled to Medina, where he expected to find a sure asylum; but Hadi's troops pursued him thither, took him prisoner, and cut off his head, as they had done to all such of his family as were taken at Mecca.

Principles of
the Zendians.

Hadi treated with the same rigour a set of enthusiasts, who had been long endeavouring to establish a doctrine equally contrary to the mussulman religion, and to the peace
and

and order of society. They held there were HADI.
 two eternal principles, the one good, the Hegyra 169.
 other evil : they alledged, that all things Ch. æt 786.
 ought to be possessed in common, and that
 men ought not to eat the flesh of animals.

These sectaries, who were called Zendians, began to propagate their tenets, in the latter years of the Caliphate of Mahadi. As they were looked on as madmen, and incapable of raising any considerable party, little notice was at first taken of them ; but their numbers greatly increasing, it was soon discovered, that their errors tended not only to the destruction of religion, but also were absolutely incompatible with the civil law, and even contrary to good manners. Mahadi therefore banished them from his dominions, whence they spread themselves in Asia and Europe, and particularly in France, where they were known by the name of the Albigenfes.

Some of them having presumed to appear Hadi exter-
 again immediately after the death of the last minates them
 Caliph, Hadi his son took the most effec- by examples
 tual method to destroy that sect : he caused a of severity.
 great many gibbets to be erected in Bagdat, and as many Zendians, and even of such as countenanced and assisted them as they could find, were hanged there on the spot. These severe examples terrified the survivors, and in a short time, not one of the sect publicly appeared in the whole mussulman dominions.

HADI.

Hegyra 169.
Ch. ær. 785.Hadi designs
to nominate
his son to be
his successor.

Hadi thinking he should not soon see any fresh commotions in his territories, raised a violent disturbance, by a design he formed of transmitting the crown to his children, to the prejudice of his brother Haroun; who, according to the regulation made by Mahadi in his life-time, was to succeed to the Caliphate upon his eldest brother's death; which order of succession had been approved of by the grandees of the state.

The Caliph was therefore resolved to infringe this order; and though he had no heir but a son named Giaffer, who was an infant, he fully resolved to declare him immediate successor to the crown.

Reflections

which his vizir
makes on his
design.

He imparted his design to his vizir Jahia; but it will appear, that he did so rather with a view to prevail on that officer to countenance his project, than to ask his opinion of it. The vizir, who was a wise and prudent man, set before his master all the difficulties that would probably arise in the execution of his scheme. He observed to him, that Haroun was greatly beloved by the nobility on account of his bravery; that the state was highly obliged to him for having employed her forces very successfully against the Greeks; that he was, in particular, the favourite of his mother, the last Caliph's widow, who was too haughty, patiently to suffer such an injury to be done to her beloved son: that, on the other hand, the people would by no means approve the choice he intended

to

to make ; that the Mussulmen would expect HADI.
 to have a prince on the throne able to per- Hegyra 169.
 form all the functions of a Caliph, namely, to Ch. ær. 785.
 say the prayers, to command the army, to
 lead them on the pilgrimage to Meccâ ; in a
 word, a man of years fit to govern. He
 concluded with telling him, that if he had
 the least regard for his own peace, he would
 not think of breaking through the regulation
 made by his father, or at least, that he would
 wait till the young prince was of a fit age to
 appear amongst the people, and gain their
 affections.

Hadi listened to the discourse of his vizir The Caliph is
 with great attention, and pretended to be enraged, and
 convinced by his reasons ; but as he had en- resolves to de-
 tertained a strong opinion, that his minister stroy him.
 opposed his design only on account of his in-
 timate connections with Haroun his brother,
 and Alfhizaram his mother, the late Caliph's
 widow, he formed a bloody resolution, which
 he thought absolutely necessary for his own
 repose.

He sent one evening for a Mussulman of
 note, called Harthamath, in whom he had
 long placed great confidence. He bitterly
 complained of Haroun his brother, and Ja-
 hia his vizir, who (he said) were continually
 plotting against him, and endeavouring to
 alienate the hearts of his subjects : he added,
 that in order to put an end to the fears he
 entertained on account of their secret prac-
 tices, he was resolved to get rid of them, and

HADI.

Hegyra 170.

Ch. ær. 786.

had made choice of him for the performance of so important a piece of service.

Harthamath being struck with horror at the thoughts of such an office, fell at the Caliph's feet, and begged to be excused from executing so cruel an order. Hadi enraged at his refusal, hastily quitted the room, without saying a word more. Harthamath concluding his life was in the utmost danger, dared not return home; he therefore went to take shelter in the apartment of the Caliph's mother, in hopes that he might remain concealed there during the night, and might find means to avoid Hadi's fury.

Death of the
Caliph.

That very night terminated Harthamath's fears, and the dangers that menaced Haroun and Jahia: Hadi died, after a reign of about eighteen months duration.

Authors differ
concerning the
cause of it.

Historians, in general, agree that the Caliph's mother was deeply concerned in his death. This princess, who was of a proud and haughty temper, had greatly assumed the management of publick affairs, and was surrounded by a croud of lords, who were soliciting her for posts and employments. The Caliph took umbrage at it, and having several times advised her to act with more caution, and not to interfere in the business of the state, he one day told her that he would cause every lord to have his head struck off, who should be so constant in paying his court to her. They say, that in a short time he sent her a poisoned goose, in hopes, by that

means, to make away with this princess; HADI.
 but as his late undutiful behaviour gave her Hegyra 170.
 cause to suspect him, she took such precau- Ch. ær. 786.
 tions as saved her life. She gave part of the
 goose to a dog, who eat it and died on the
 spot.

This event, added to the Caliph's ill-will
 to his brother, made her form a resolution
 of anticipating Hadi, and putting it out of
 his power to execute his cruelties on her fa-
 mily. Some say she bribed two of that
 prince's concubines, who when he was in a
 deep sleep stifled him with pillows: others
 assert, that his mother did the deed herself.

Nijaristhan, an Arabian author, relates,
 that the Caliph died suddenly of a cough
 which seized him in the night-time, after
 having drank a glass of water; but from the
 manner in which he relates that fact, it may
 be gathered, that the Caliph's mother had a
 hand in his death. And it may also be
 strongly suspected by that passage in Nija-
 risthan, in which Harthamath is introduced,
 and relates to one of his friends the conver-
 sation that passed between him and the Ca-
 liph, and what happened in consequence
 of it.

The Caliph, said he, having one day com-
 manded me to appear before him, spoke to
 me in these terms: "Thou knowest Har-
 thamath, that the treacherous Jahia the son
 of Kaled, my chief minister, is my invete-
 rate enemy; that he continually strives to

HADI.

Hegyra 170.

Ch. ær. 786.

estrangle from me the hearts of my subjects and is daily endeavouring to make them the friends of my brother Haroun : in thee I have placed my confidence, knowing well thy zeal and affection ; if therefore thou wilt give me a proof of thy love, thou must bring me both their heads ; for whilst either of them breathes, I cannot be sure of my crown, or of my life.

“ This execution done, thou shalt put to the sword all the Aliens and their adherents, who are now confined in prison. Thou must then put thyself at the head of my troops, of which I give thee the command, and march them with all speed to Cusah. Thou shalt immediately withdraw all the Abassians who are there, and then set the city on fire.”

When the Caliph, continued Harthamath, had communicated to me these terrible orders, which he required me to put in execution, I fell at his feet, humbly to represent to him the fatal consequences of his commands ; and told him I could not possibly execute them as he desired. The Caliph, enraged at my refusal, hastily turned from me, and retired to his chamber. It may easily be conceived, to how great a degree I was seized with fear, as the Caliph might cause me to be assassinated, in order to conceal his barbarous design. Being unable to speak, and uncertain what to do, I went into the apartment of the sultaneß Alshizazam,

shizazam, hoping I might be able to hide myself in some corner, and escape the assassins the Caliph might send to my house. About the hour of midnight I heard the voice of the sultaneſs, who called me by my name ; but as I could not conceive how ſhe ſhould know I was in her apartment I thought I was miſtaken, (though I afterwards found that I was eſpied by a ſlave, who had informed the princeſs of it.) I then concluded that the Caliph had communicated to her his black deſign, and the order he had given me to put it in execution, and that the princeſs had prevailed on him to lay it aſide. She called me a ſecond time, ſaying, Come boldly Harthamath ; come, come, and ſee the Caliph lying dead on his bed. That prince was indeed juſt expired of a cough which ſeized him, after drinking a glaſs of water. I was ſtruck at the event, which employed all my thoughts, when ſhe added, Go, and tell my ſon Haroun what you have ſeen. I went inſtantly to that prince, who aſſembled the grandees of the ſtate, and cauſed himſelf to be proclaimed Caliph.

HADI.

Hegyra 170.

Ch. ær. 786.

HAROUN.

Hegyra 170.

Ch. ær. 786.

HAROUN-AL-RASHID.

The TWENTY-FOURTH CALIPH.

The Caliph
places his
whole confi-
dence in the
vizir Jahia.

HAROUN having attained the throne in the manner already mentioned, amply rewarded the persons to whom he was indebted for his crown and his life. The vizir Jahia, who had so strongly opposed Hadi's design of excluding Haroun from the Caliphate, was continued in his post. The new Caliph placed his whole confidence in that minister, whom he had always about him.

He consents
to the mar-
riage of the
vizir's son,
with the king
of Chozarar's
daughter.

The great favour shewn by Haroun to this officer, gained him the highest credit : the sovereigns of the states bordering on the mussulman empire, courted his friendship ; and some of them even proposed to make a family-alliance with him.

Amongst others, the king of Chozarar offered him the princess his daughter as a wife for one of his sons : the match was too advantageous to be refused ; and the minister spoke of it to the Caliph, who readily gave his consent. The king of Chozarar immediately caused the princess to begin her journey, with a numerous train of lords, who accompanied her to the frontiers of the Caliph's dominions ; where she was received with the utmost pomp and ceremony. But she had
scarce

scarce travelled a few miles in the mufſul-HAROUN.
 man territories, when ſhe was ſeized with Hegyra 170.
 a violent fit of the cholick, which obliged Ch. ær. 786.
 her to ſtop at a place called Bardaha; when Death of the
 the fit became ſo violent, that all remedies princeſs.
 were ineffectual, and the princeſs died.

The vizir was ſo much the more grieved Hegyra 171.
 at this loſs, as it engaged the Caliph in a war. Ch. ær. 787.
 The king of Chozarar accuſed the Muſſul-The king of
 men of having killed his daughter: it is Chozarar
 not known on what reaſons he founded ſo makes an in-
 odious an accuſation; but it is certain he de- cursion on the
 clared war againſt the Caliph, and it was Caliph's ter-
 ſoon known at Bagdat, that the troops of ritories.
 that prince were on their march, in order
 to fall on the empire.

The Muſſulmen, amazed at ſo ſudden an
 incurſion, haſtened to defend their frontiers;
 but the Caliph having been obliged to ſend
 his beſt troops to the borders of Greece, on
 account of ſome commotions which hap-
 pened there, he had no other forces to op-
 poſe the Chozararians, but ſuch as were new
 levied and undiſciplined, who were unable
 to ſtop the progreſs of the enemy: part of
 them were cut in pieces, and the remainder
 put to the rout; and the conquerors having
 ravaged the whole country into which they
 made their irruption, returned home with
 an infinite number of priſoners whom they
 made ſlaves.

The Caliph's army was more ſucceſſful Hegyra 172.
 on the borders of Greece. The empreſs Ch. ær. 788.
 Irene

HAROUN. Irene having broken the conditions upon Hegyra 172. which the truce had been granted, Haroun Ch. ær. 788. sent out a numerous army against her, which over-run all Asia Minor, as far as Ephesus, laying waste the provinces of the Grecian empire. Irene was then sensible of the fault she had committed in drawing upon herself so formidable an enemy, at the time she was fully employed in the interior part of her dominions; she therefore, without delay, caused proposals to be made, in consequence of which Haroun consented to renew the truce which the preceding Caliphs had granted to her.

The Caliph renews the truce with the Greeks.

Hegyra 173. Peace being restored in that quarter, Haroun Ch. ær. 789. took care to secure the frontiers against the incursions of the Chozararians, or any other bordering nation; and when he found himself guarded against their attempts, he resolved to take advantage of the calm, in order to polish his people, and diminish a little the barbarity which was as it were natural to them.

He cultivates the arts and sciences in his empire.

Nothing seemed more likely to insure the success of such an undertaking, than to inspire the people with a love of letters; and it was the very method the Caliph followed.

That prince, who had a solid judgment, and a refined taste, was the first that applied himself to the cultivation of the arts and sciences: he invited learned men to his dominions, and gave them rewards and pensions. When he went to survey his provinces,

vinces, and even when he was at the head HAROUN.
of his troops, he was always attended by a Hegyra 173.
certain number of chosen persons, with Ch. ær. 789.
whom he usually conversed on diverse kinds
of literature.

He was at a truly royal expence to impart
to his subjects the taste he naturally had to
the sciences. By his command, many
Greek and Latin authors were translated
into Arabick : he also caused a great num-
ber of copies of them to be made, and distri-
buted all over the empire, in order that
the curious and inquisitive might be enabled
with ease to draw knowledge from such
plenteous sources. At that time appeared
in Arabia, the Iliad and the Odyssæy of Ho-
mer, and the several productions of other
eminent men who had formerly appeared
with so much lustre in Athens, and in Rome.

This taste for the sciences and polite Hegyra 174.
literature, drew into Arabia all the trea- Ch. ær. 790.
sures of Greece and Italy. The manners
of his subjects were softened, and their
judgments becoming more solid, they were
desirous of knowledge ; and in a short time
there arose amongst them eminent persons,
who gained the highest reputation. Haroun
had the honour of setting the first hand to
that important work, and to encourage it by
his example ; but it did not acquire any
great degree of perfection till the days of
his successors.

Besides

HAROUN.

Hegyra 175.

Ch. ær. 791.

Besides the great pains the Caliph took in making these improvements, he also applied himself to the revival of good order in his dominions; he ordained strict and salutary laws, and appointed such magistrates as were likely to administer equal justice to his subjects. It was his love for justice in particular, that gained him the surname of Al-Rashid, which signifies Judge, or Lover of Justice.

But what idea soever historians may have endeavoured to give us of that Caliph's goodness, moderation, and equity, certain instances will soon be mentioned, which shew so great an oddity of temper, and so great dishonesty, cruelty, and barbarity, as sink him beneath humanity.

It would be very difficult, for example, to justify the treatment he bestowed on a considerable personage of the family of Ali, with whom he basely broke his word, after having engaged it in the most solemn manner. The fact is as follows :

Hegyra 176.

Ch. ær. 792.

Whilst the Caliph was enjoying the fruits of the peace he had by his great care and vigilance established in his dominions, he was informed that a numerous party had arisen in Georgia and Dilaim; and that he was threatened with nothing less than the loss of his crown.

Jahia, a descendant of Ali, is proclaimed Caliph.

The party of the Aliens still subsisted; for notwithstanding all his attempts to exterminate them, he had not been able to effect his

his design. Jahia, the son of Hafan, a HAROUN.
 descendant of Ali in a right line, had hap- Hegyra 176.
 pily escaped the search that had been made Ch. ær. 792.
 at the times a resolution was taken to de-
 stroy that family. He had privately formed
 a considerable party, and the revolt grew to
 such a head, that at last he was openly de-
 clared Caliph.

Haroun was no sooner informed of this
 disagreeable event, than he took the most
 prudent measures to put an end to the re-
 bellion. He ordered Fadhell to march at
 the head of fifty thousand men to reduce
 the rebels. That general having advanced
 to Chorasan, had probably an opportunity
 of being thoroughly acquainted with the cha-
 racter and disposition of Jahia, and of judging
 with what great ease he might prevail on
 him to return to his duty, by treating him
 with respect, and flattering him with the
 hopes that a provision should be made for
 him, suitable to his great merit and high
 extraction.

Fadhell therefore halted in Chorasan, and
 privately sent to Jahia a trusty person, who,
 at the same time that he exaggerated the
 number of forces Jahia would soon have to
 combat with, suggested to him the means of
 avoiding the misfortune that threatened him:
 he expatiated upon the great desire which
 Fadhell had expressed to continue upon
 peaceable terms with him, and informed
 him, that the general had already paved
 the

Fadhell pre-
 vails on him
 to treat with
 the Caliph.

HAROUN.

Hegyra 176.

Ch. ær. 792.

the way to his reconciliation with Haroun; that he had assured the Caliph, that Jahia ought not to be made accountable for the revolt of Georgia; and if he had accepted the Caliphate, it was only to comply with the desires of the Aliens, who had taken advantage of his pretensions to compel him to head them, and undertake a war against his will: in a word, the artful negotiator so well performed his part, that Jahia was staggered, and entered into a conference on the means which might be used to appease Haroun's wrath, and secure him from the resentment of the Aliens, who would doubtless attempt to wreak their vengeance on him for deserting them.

The messenger finding that nothing remained but to provide for Jahia's security, looked on the affair as concluded. He proposed to him to escape from Georgia, and go to Bagdat, that he might make a renunciation in the presence of Haroun, who, on his part, would take him under his protection, and afford him a sure asylum at his court, against all such as should make any attempt upon his person.

Jahia foreseeing the consequences of a step of so great importance, raised many difficulties; but the negociator solved them all, and at last prevailed on him to write a letter with his own hand to Fadhell, with an account of the resolutions he had taken, that they might be imparted to Haroun, who could

could alone give the security necessary to put a final end to the affair.

HAROUN.

Hegyra 176.

Ch. ær. 792.

Fadhell, highly pleased with the success of his negociation, dispatched a particular account of it to the Caliph. Haroun, who was delighted to find the rebellion ended with so little difficulty, and without bloodshed, sent to Fadhell a writing under his hand, by which he promised, on his honour, that he would treat Jahia with all the respect due to his birth; and that he would never take the least step, in order to deprive him either of life or liberty; and lest the Alien should start any new difficulty, on account of suspicions he might entertain of some of his courtiers, he caused the writing to be signed by the chiefs of the Abassians, and by all the grandees of the state.

The Caliph sends to Jahia assurances of safety for his life and liberty.

This authentick obligation was forthwith sent to Jahia. Fadhell's envoy, who was so successful in the former part of the negociation, was appointed to complete it, and fully answered the expectations of his principal. Jahia seeing the writing signed by the Caliph's own hand, and strengthened by the consent of the chief of the nobility, made no further objections on that head; but he was much at a loss to know how he should get out of the hands of the Aliens. The messenger also removed this difficulty, and so well contrived his measures, that he carried him out of Georgia, and not the least suspicion was entertained of his escape. He conducted

HAROUN.

Hegyra 176.

Ch. ær. 792.

conducted him with all speed to Chorasan, where Fadhell, at the head of his troops, gave him a very honourable reception : and after Jahia had rested a few days, he set out with the general for the court of Bagdat.

Hegyra 177.

Ch. ær. 793.

Jahia comes to the Caliph's court, and meets with a very gracious reception.

There he received from the Caliph all the polite and civil treatment he could expect from a prince, who piqued himself on his noble and generous sentiments. " Think yourself at home, my lord," said he, " and be assured I would share my throne with you, if it was in my power to do so ; I desire you will live entirely after your own manner ; you may visit me if you think fit, or you may decline it ; I shall in either case be well pleased, as I shall be certain that you do what is most agreeable to you." Haroun then gave him a stately apartment in the palace ; appointed officers to attend him ; in a word, he omitted nothing likely to please a prince who had so generously put himself into his hands.

Jahia, full of sentiments of gratitude for so kind a treatment, did not repent of the step he had taken : on the contrary, he ratified in the Caliph's presence what he had promised by the mouth of Fadhell, and being highly satisfied that he had escaped the danger into which he would have been drawn by the revolt of the Aliens, he settled at the court of Bagdat, where he enjoyed a tranquillity, which he was sensible he could not have met with amongst rebels.

But

But these happy days were of no long duration. Haroun, either through his natural inconstancy, or by the instigation of some of his courtiers, changed his conduct towards Jahia. Though he had no cause to fear a rival who had taken refuge at his court, and had given up all his hopes and pretensions for the sake of peace, yet he reflected, that whilst he lived a party might arise in his favour, and might set him on the throne ; he therefore cruelly resolved to make away with that prince. Fadhell, Giasser, and the rest of the Barmecidæ, detested the design, and did all in their power to prevent the Caliph from executing it ; but their remonstrances were ineffectual, and it was soon known that the unhappy Jahia had been assassinated.

HAROUN.

Hegyra 178.

Ch. ær. 794.

He is assassinated by order of the Caliph.

Such of the Caliph's subjects as knew of the solemn promises he had made to that prince, were filled with indignation at so base an action, which greatly sullied his character ; and it was long e'er they could recover the consternation they had been thrown into by such a piece of treachery.

But by degrees the fatal impressions which were made on the Caliph's subjects, by his false and cruel behaviour, were dissipated : plausible reasons were invented to justify him : the adulation of his courtiers, the works of the men of letters who were protected by Haroun, and above all, the zeal he affected to shew in the performance of re-

HAROUN. religious duties, all contributed to set him
 Hegyra 179. right even in the opinion of those who had
 Ch. ær. 795. appeared to be the most incensed against him.

The Caliph In a short time he performed an act, by
 goes a pilgrim- which he regained the esteem of all his sub-
 mage on foot jects. He declared he would go on a pil-
 to Mecca. grimage to Mecca; and he accordingly set
 out from Bagdat with all the outward ap-
 pearances of the greatest devotion. He tra-
 velled to that city on foot, and performed
 at the Caabah all the ceremonies prescribed
 by Mahomet: from thence he went to Me-
 dina, and having prayed at the prophet's
 tomb, he returned to Bagdat, having gained
 in all places he went to, a great character
 for his piety, sweetness of disposition, and
 love for the people.

Hegyra 180. On his return to the capital he resumed
 Ch. ær. 796. his conversation with the learned; and as
 he gave them fresh marks of favour and pro-
 tection, his praises were celebrated by histo-
 rians, but more especially by the poets, who
 loudly proclaimed the virtues and talents of
 their benefactor; and it would have been
 happy for him, if their eulogies had incited
 him to gain the good qualities he wanted, or
 had confirmed him in the practice of those
 virtues he already possessed.

Hegyra 181. But whilst they were thus applauding the
 Ch. ær. 797. candor, equity, and integrity of that prince,
 he, through an oddity of disposition, for
 which no plausible reason can be given,
 contradicted

contradicted all their praises by the perpetration of a shameful deed, which was by so much the more dishonourable, as it was premeditated; and the blow once struck, he justified the act with the utmost obstinacy, and would not suffer any person to tell him he had done amiss; though, at the same time, he could not deny the injustice of his proceedings.

This act related to the illustrious family of the Barmecidæ. Though the Caliph had the greatest obligations to that family, yet he resolved to destroy them, and that on a very extraordinary account. This fact is a point of so much consequence in the life of Haroun, that it deserves to be fully explained; I shall therefore shew, with all possible conciseness, what the Barmecidæ were, and by what strange fatality, after having been loaded with riches and honours, both by the Ommyans and Abbassians, they suddenly fell into disgrace and extreme wretchedness.

In the close of Soliman's reign, mention hath been made of a prince named Giaffer, issued from the ancient kings of Persia, who having been forced to fly his country, came with his family and settled in that Caliph's dominions; and an account hath been already given why he was surnamed Barmeki, a name which descended to all his posterity, who were then called the Barmecidæ.

Giaffer was in the highest degree of favour with the Ommyans. His children, who

HAROUN.

Hegyra 181.

Ch. ær. 797.

History of the
Barmecidæ.Advancement
of the Barme-
cidæ under the
Ommyans
and Abbassians.

HAROUN.

Hegyra 181.

Ch. ar. 797.

who inherited his virtues and great capacity, were also equally fortunate; and after having filled the most eminent posts in the time of the last Caliphs of the house of Ommiyah, they kept their footing under the Abassians.

Jahia, one of Giaffer's descendants, was chief of the family of the Barmecidæ in the caliphate of Haroun. When that prince ascended the throne, he continued him in the post of vizir, which he had enjoyed under the two preceding Caliphs. Independent of that minister's superior merit, Haroun had a particular reason to bestow his favour on him. Jahia had presided over his education; he had inspired him with a taste for literature; and to him the Caliph was indebted for the progress he had made in the sciences, and for the wise regulations which had been formed, in order to bring them into his territories.

The children of that minister appeared with great reputation at the head of publick affairs. Fadhell the eldest, had a share in the ministry, and at the same time was reputed to be the greatest general of the age.

The second, named Giaffer, was eminent for his love to the sciences, and was esteemed the most eloquent and polite writer of his time.

Mahomet and Musa, who were the two youngest, kept up the reputation of their family, and filled with dignity some of the chief employments of the state. As

As they were born amidst greatness and opulence, Jahia their father had early taught them to set no farther value on riches, than as they would enable them to reward virtue and relieve the distressed. “ Be generous,” said he often to them, “ be liberal of your substance to those who merit your favours on account of their talents, their virtues, or their misfortunes. Do not fear that your means will be diminished by your bounty ; for though you should be deprived of your riches, by the permission of God, or the wickedness of man, the good use you have made of them will afford you an inward consolation, and support you in the day of adversity ; but if you employ them in luxury and riot, you must foolishly flatter yourselves that you are absolute proprietors of a blessing, which is only lent you to use for a time ; and the loss of it will drive you to despair.”

HAROUN.

Hegyra 181.

Ch. ær. 797.

Advice which
Jahia gives to
his children.

These admirable maxims, which were not so much a lesson from Jahia as a true picture of his own actions, made the deepest impressions upon the minds of his children. Their merit increased in proportion to their years : they were soon capable of the highest employments, and the Caliph was very earnest to trust them with the management of affairs, before they had attained the age of manhood. His great affection for them lasted many years, during which time that prince continually heaped on them riches and honours.

HAROUN.

Hegyra 182.

Ch. ær. 798.

Giaffer resigns
the vizirship to
Fadhell his
brother.

Jahia having resigned the office of vizir, Giaffer, his second son, was appointed to succeed him; but he found such charms in a private life, that he was soon induced to lay down that post, which he procured for his brother Fadhell, who maintained the same reputation as his father and brother had acquired in that honourable station.

Giaffer having rid himself of the burthen of managing the affairs of the empire, thought now of passing his time with chearfulness and ease: the Caliph, who also was the same way inclined, became more fond of his favourite, insomuch that he would never be without him, nor could he taste any pleasure, unless his dear Giaffer was a partaker of it.

The Caliph had an equal tenderness for Abassah, his own sister: he took delight each day in passing some hours with her; but the great affection he bore to his favourite, made him regret that it was impossible to have his company at the same time; for the princess lodged in a private part of the palace near the Caliph's wives, and no person could gain admittance there.

Haroun therefore resolved, that form and custom should give place to the gratification of his humour; and though it was not very seemly to take his sister from the company of her own sex, and accustom her to the society of men without a woman to keep her in countenance, he appointed an apart-
ment

ment for her in his own palace, and ordered, HAROUN.
 that for the future she should constantly eat Hegyra 182.
 at his own table. Ch. ær. 798.

By this means Giaffer had frequent op- Giaffer falls
 portunities of seeing an amiable princess, on desperately in
 whom he had often heard the Caliph bestow love with A-
 the greatest encomiums. He was enchanted bassah the Ca-
 with her noble air, and above all with her lip's sister.
 wit, and the graces and charms of her con-
 versation. Giaffer did not escape the prin-
 cess's observation; she soon distinguished him
 above the other courtiers; and they insensi-
 bly took a liking to each other. The free-
 doms that are used at table, and the mirth
 and chearfulness of the guests, soon fur-
 nished Giaffer with an opportunity of dis-
 closing his passion, and of being convinced
 that it was not displeasing to her. The Ca- Hegyra 184.
 liph soon discovered their mutual inclina- Ch. ær. 800.
 tions, and far from shewing any resentment
 on the discovery, he seemed inclined to make
 him completely happy, by giving him hopes
 that Abassah should be his wife.

This was the height of Giaffer's wishes; The Caliph
 and the princess on her part having readily consents to
 complied with her brother's proposal, Ha- their mar-
 roun resolved to terminate that important riage, but con-
 affair with the utmost expedition: but before ditionally.
 it was concluded, he required of the two
 lovers that they should never see each other
 but in his presence, and should live together
 like brother and sister. This condition was
 proposed in the midst of a splendid enter-
 tainment,

HAROUN.

Hegyra 184.
Ch. ær. 800.

tainment, when the wine was far from being forgot : the generality of the Syrian Caliphs having made no scruple of drinking that liquor publickly and to excess.

Giaffer and Abassah probably flattered themselves, that so singular a condition as the Caliph had imposed on them, was rather an effect of the fumes of liquor than of a fixed resolution : they therefore promised, and even swore to obey Haroun's orders, in hopes that when he came to reflect on so ridiculous a prohibition, he would be the first to dispense with the performance of it.

The marriage was therefore celebrated on that condition ; and Giaffer, who depended upon seeing it soon revoked, was greatly amazed when the Caliph again told him he must not think of using the prerogatives of a husband with Abassah, and threatened him even with death, if he should find his orders not complied with.

Hegyra 185.
Ch. ær. 801.

They transgress the law imposed by the Caliph.

They were forced therefore to consent to this rigorous prohibition ; and indeed the unhappy pair did not dare for a long time to infringe the cruel law the Caliph had imposed on them : but Abassah having sent to her husband some verses,* in which she

* The following is the purport of Abassah's verses, as D'Herbelot relates them from Ben Abu Ajelah, an Arabian historian :

“ I did resolve to keep my flame a prisoner in my breast ; but spight of me it has forced its way, and now reveals itself. If you do not yield to this declaration, my modesty will perish together with my secret. But if you reject it, you will save my

she, in a very ingenious manner, expressed HAROUN. her ardent passion ; Giaffer answered her in Hegyra 185. the same strain, and they forgot the Caliph's Ch. ær. 801. prohibition.

The effects of their mutual commerce soon appeared, and they were forced to use every kind of artifice to prevent the prince from discovering it. Abassah so managed her person, that she imposed on the Caliph, and was delivered of a son without its being known at court. The child was immediately carried to Mecca to be privately brought up.

The Caliph would ever have remained ignorant of the event, if a base slave, whom The Caliph is informed of it. they were obliged to entrust with the secret, had not revealed it : however, the Caliph took no notice of the information he had received ; he delayed his vengeance till the time he should go a journey to Mecca, where he expected to meet with such information as was necessary to set the matter in a clear light.

When he arrived at that city he caused a Hegyra 186. strict enquiry to be made, and he found that Ch. ær. 802. Giaffer had actually sent thither his child which was born of Abassah, but he could not possibly discover where the child was ; for so soon as the Caliph set out on his journey to Mecca, the infant was taken from

my life by your refusal : however it be, I am sure I shall not die unrevenged, for my death will plainly shew who was my murderer."

thence ;

HAROUN.
Hegyra 186.
Ch. ær. 802.

thence; and not all his authority could procure him the least intelligence to what place it had been carried.

He puts to death Giaffer and Abassah, and exterminates the Barmecidæ.

Haroun was so exasperated against the unhappy pair, that he resolved from that moment to destroy them, and at the same time to put to death the whole race of the Barmecidæ. He began with Giaffer, whose head he ordered to be struck off: he then sent orders to Bagdat, in consequence of which the unfortunate Abassah was put to death on the spot†. Jahia and his children were cast into prison, their estates were confiscated, and all their relations shared the same fate; they were seized in different provinces of the empire, and for the most part died either a violent death, or in extreme want and misery.

Constancy of Jahia under his misfortunes.

This terrible misfortune set the courage and truly heroical constancy of Jahia, that chief

† Some Arabian writers say, that the unfortunate Abassah was thrown into a well. Abu Ajelah, an Arabian author relates, that the princess was only banished, and reduced to a most miserable condition. He tells us, that a lady of her acquaintance having met her in the place of her exile, had a conversation with her, in which Abassah calling to mind her former grandeur, informed the lady she had once four hundred slaves to wait on her, and that she was then in want of every thing; that she had nothing but two sheep skins, one of which served for a shift, the other for a gown, but that she did not repine at her situation: that she attributed her misfortunes to her want of gratitude for the blessings of providence; that she confessed her crime, and repented of it, and was contented. The lady then made her a present of five hundred drachmas, with which she seemed as well pleased as if she had been restored to her former rank. D'Herbelot *Bibliothèque orient.*

of the Barmecidæ, in its true light. This HAROUN.
 unfortunate old man gave proofs of it Hegyra 186.
 (though he was loaded with chains) when- Ch. ær. 802.
 ever he was visited in prison by any of his
 friends: for though, after the manner of
 courtiers, the most part of them abandoned
 him the moment he fell into disgrace, yet
 there were a few who were so generous as
 not to desert him in his misfortunes; and
 who strove to arm him with patience to bear
 up against the ills with which he was op-
 pressed.

Jahia was thoroughly sensible of the great
 value of their friendship; however, he con-
 vinced them that virtue had long put him
 out of the reach of the strokes of fortune.
 “Power and riches” said he to them, “are
 no more than loans, which fortune trusts to
 man; we must be contented with the use of
 them for a season. She hath chosen us for
 an example to such as shall come after us,
 that they may learn not to be proud of her
 gifts, but to make a prudent use of them.
 God doth no wrong to man in withdrawing
 the favours he hath in a plenteous manner
 bestowed on him. He owed him nothing;
 he hath gratified him therewith according
 to his own appointed time: it is now his
 pleasure to confer them on others; it is our
 duty to submit to his will. The wise man
 ought not to covet riches, but he may re-
 ceive them, in order to employ them for the
 good of the state; and should enjoy the re-
 sidue,

HAROUN.

Hegyra 186.

Ch. ær. 802.

fidue, only as a traveller enjoys his rest for a night at his inn on a journey."

Such were the sentiments of that admirable man in the height of his misfortunes. He also endeavoured to comfort his children, who were confined in the same prison with him, and who being of an age to enjoy the choicest favours of fortune, were more dejected at the fatal change. "How is it possible," said one of his children to him one day, "that having served God and the state with the utmost zeal and application; having loved to bestow favours on all men; and having done nothing against the Caliph for which we can be justly blamed, we should yet be reduced to so wretched a condition?" "It is perhaps," answered Jahia, "the voice of some distressed person, who hath cried aloud to heaven for vengeance against us; perhaps we have unwittingly neglected to administer justice to some person under oppression: if the crime is involuntary, the divine mercy will pardon us. Perhaps it is an effect of his goodness, to shew us the instability of the goods of this world; he may be pleased to try our faith, to see if we love him more than ourselves; if we adore him in prosperity, and in adversity: equally just in all conditions in which he shall place us, he will obliterate all our faults, and make us worthy of him." What could Jahia have said more, if he had been enlightened with the truths of christianity?

The

The unjust and uncommon animosity of HAROUN.
 the Caliph against the Barmecidæ, was not Hegyra 186.
 satisfied with the long imprisonment he made Ch. ær. 802.
 that venerable old man suffer ; he put an end Jahia is put to
 to his misfortunes only by commanding him death.
 to be put to death, and the cruel order was
 executed in prison. They that undertook
 to dispatch him, brought back to the Caliph
 a paper, which they found fixed on the breast
 of the pretended criminal ; on it was con-
 tained in his own hand-writing, “ The ac-
 cused is gone first ; the accuser will soon fol-
 low him ; they must both appear before that
 tribunal where false pleas and illicit proceed-
 ings will not avail.”

The inflexible Haroun was somewhat
 moved on reading the paper ; he seemed to
 be sorry that he had acted so rigorously against
 a venerable person, to whose charge he could
 lay no crime ; but this change was of no
 service to the rest of the family of that un-
 fortunate minister : not one of them could
 obtain a pardon, or a restitution of their
 estates and effects ; insomuch that such of
 them as escaped death, were obliged, for the
 most part, to go far from Bagdat, and not
 daring to discover themselves in the places
 where they took shelter, were forced to fol-
 low the meanest employments to get a live-
 lihood.

Haroun carried his unjust resentment
 against that family so far, as to attempt to
 abolish

HAROUN.

Hegyra 186.

Ch. ær. 802.

The Caliph
attempts to
abolish the
memory of
the Barmeci-
dæ.

abolish the memory of them : but his prohibitions against speaking of them were long in vain, and he could no otherwise impose silence on the people, than by proclaiming that all such persons as should presume to make the least mention of the Barmecidæ should suffer death.

He causes an
old man to be
seized for
speaking in
their praise.

There was however an old man, venerable both on account of his virtues and advanced age, who, through the affection, respect and gratitude he bore to the memory of the Barmecidæ, dared the Caliph's prohibition, and openly spoke in their praise without fearing his menaces.

Mondir, for so the old man was called, used every day to take his stand before one of their chief houses, and entertain the passengers with an account of the virtues, noble actions, and generosity of the Barmecidæ, and of the great services they had done the state. The Caliph having been informed of the old man's boldness, caused him to be apprehended, and he was soon condemned to die. Mondir received his sentence with the greatest resolution, and asked no other favour but that he might be permitted to speak a few words to the Caliph before it was put in execution.

Remonstrances of the old
man to the
Caliph.

Haroun having consented, the old man made him so pathetick a speech, that the prince had not the power to interrupt him. Mondir represented, with equal warmth and respect,

respect, how greatly the mussulman state was HAROUN.
 indebted to the unfortunate Barmecidæ. “ You Hegyra 186.
 chose them, O commander of the faithful,” Ch. ær. 802.
 said he, “ to govern the empire under your
 authority ; you placed confidence in them ;
 you yourself acknowledged their uncommon
 merit, their zeal, their capacity. Honours and
 favours were abundantly bestowed on them be-
 fore our eyes ; you taught us to love and revere
 them ; and can your people be culpable for
 entertaining sentiments, to which you your-
 self have given rise ? They have shewn them-
 selves to be faithful subjects, the support of
 your throne, and beneficent to all such as
 were indigent or oppressed : how then can
 we forget their benefits, their virtues, their
 services ? You may silence the base and the
 ungrateful ; but your power does not ex-
 tend to the emotions of the heart, or the
 sentiments of the mind : and I dare boldly
 assert, that if you should attempt to constrain
 and smother them by threats of punishment,
 you would only add to their strength and vi-
 gour ; and the very ruins of the palace of the
 Barmecidæ would loudly proclaim their
 praise, should we be so ungrateful as to re-
 main silent.”

This discourse made a very deep impres-
 sion upon the Caliph ; he even seemed to be
 moved to compassion : it was then hoped he
 would have shewn a sorrow for his conduct
 towards the Barmecidæ ; but that prince only

HAROUN.

Hegyra 186.

Ch. ær. 802.

revoked the cruel sentence he had passed on Mondir, and set him at liberty.

The old man overjoyed, not so much that he had escaped with life, as that he had appeased the wrath of the Caliph against an illustrious family, which had been so unjustly proscribed, fell at his feet to return him thanks : when he arose in order to depart, he was amazed to see the Caliph make him a present : it was a golden plate. Mondir, when he received it, gave a fresh proof of his inviolable regard for the Barmecidæ : for looking on Haroun's munificence as a certain proof that he was not displeased with the commendations he had bestowed on that family, shewing the prince's gift, he cried out, " This is a new favour I have received from the hands of the Barmecidæ."

Arabian authors celebrate the praises of the Barmecidæ.

In vain therefore did Haroun strive to exterminate the remembrance of a family so productive of eminent men, who had done the most important services to the state. The voice of the people avenged them for the cruelty and injustice of the prince. Authors, on their part, as well poets as historians, loudly celebrate their praise ; and it has been observed, that there never was either prince or sultan amongst the Arabians, who employed the pens of so many writers as the Barmecidæ. The beneficent character of that family, is perfectly well expressed in the Arabian verses cited by El Makin.

" Children

“ Children of Barmeki,” said the poet, HAROUN.
 “ what great good ye did in this world, Hegyra 186.
 and what great good ye would still have Ch. ær. 802.
 done! The earth, which was heretofore
 your spouse, is now become your widow.”

Arabian authors agree in general, that the Different opi-
 disastrous fate of the Barmecidæ was owing nions con-
 to a disgust taken by Haroun to some act of cerning the
 Giaffer, the son of Jahia; but they disagree cause of the
 as to the particular cause of the Caliph's re- ruin of the
 sentment against his favourite. Some say Barmecidæ.
 it was for not duly complying with the con-
 dition which was prescribed on his marriage
 with Abassah. Others assert, that Haroun
 having resolved to put to death Jahia, prince
 of the Aliens, he charged Giaffer with that
 commission, who refused to imbrue his hands
 in the blood of an innocent man; and
 therefore the Caliph caused his head to be
 cut off, and deprived the whole family of
 his favour. And others again relate, that
 the ruin of the Barmecidæ was owing to the
 jealousy which the Caliph entertained of their
 immense riches. That prince being on a
 progress in some of the provinces of his do-
 minions, saw in several places lands and
 magnificent castles, which they told him
 belonged to Giaffer; and unluckily for the
 favourite it happened, that when the Ca-
 liph asked who was the proprietor of the
 greatest part of the castles which stood at a
 considerable distance the one from the other,
 the answer was still, Giaffer.

HAROUN.

Hegyra 186.

Ch. ær. 802.

These immense riches, added to the considerable estates, of which the relations of that favourite were in possession, gave rise, some authors say, to suspicions and fears in Haroun's breast; and he resolved forthwith to destroy so powerful a family, to prevent the mischiefs they might be able to do him.

These are the sentiments of the several authors who have mentioned the fall of the Barmecidæ. I have followed that opinion which seemed to be the best founded; but what choice soever had been made amongst the several opinions, they all tend to fully the character of Haroun, and to shew, as has been already observed, that if, on some accounts, he deserved the surname of Judge, or Lover of Justice, in other parts of his conduct he was far from meriting a title so glorious to a sovereign. I shall now resume the thread of the history of that Caliph, which I was forced to break, that all I had to say of the Barmecidæ might be related without interruption.

Haroun divides the empire amongst his children.

Whilst the Caliph was employed in framing wise and salutary orders and regulations in the state, he resolved to divide his dominions amongst his children, and to entail the Caliphate upon them successively; but his prudence failed him in taking this step, which was so likely to produce, and actually did cause, great feuds and animosities amongst them.

Haroun

Haroun had three sons, the eldest of HAROUN.
 which was called Amin, the second Ma- Hegyra 186.
 mon, and the third Motasssem ; the eldest Ch. ær. 802.
 was to have Chaldea, the three Arabias,
 Assyria, Mesopotamia, Media, Syria, Pa-
 lestine, Egypt, and all Africa as far as the
 ocean.

To the second he appointed Persia, the
 Indies, Chorasan, Taberestan, Zabul, Cha-
 bul, and Maweralnaher, a country beyond
 the river Oxus.

Motasssem, who was the youngest, had,
 for his share, Armenia, Natolia, Georgia,
 Circassia, and all the country above and
 round about the Euxine sea.

Haroun caused all his children to consent
 to this partition ; and it was afterwards con-
 firmed by the grandees of the state, who
 took an oath for the due performance of it.
 He then went to Mecca, and ordered letters
 patents to be prepared, containing an ac-
 count of the division of his territories, which
 were publicly proclaimed at the gate of
 the Caabah, and afterwards fixed on the
 door of the temple of Mecca.

But it is necessary to be observed that the
 territories so allotted were not to be held by
 those to whom they were given as indepen-
 dent sovereignties : the investiture of them
 was to be granted by the Caliph, as lord
 paramount.

Haroun being returned to Bagdat, re- Hegyra 187.
 ceived intelligence of the revolutions which Ch. ær. 803.

HAROUN. had happened in the Grecian empire. Irene
 Hegyra 187. had been deposed; and Nicephorus hav-
 Ch. ær. 803. ing attained the throne, was taking pro-
 per measures to secure the possession of it.
 The Greeks He wrote a very pathetic letter to the Ca-
 obtain a pro- longation of
 the truce. liph, on the advantages they should recipro-
 cally find in sparing the blood of their sub-
 jects. He desired Haroun to continue the
 truce he had formerly granted to the empress
 Irene, and he promised punctually to per-
 form the conditions on which she obtained
 it.

The Caliph, who was well pleased to find
 the new emperor become his tributary,
 without exposing the lives of his subjects,
 complied with Nicephorus's request; and in
 a short time departed from Bagdat to go and
 spend the winter at Jerusalem.

They make
 an irruption
 on the mus-
 fulman terri-
 tories.

That winter proving extremely severe,
 Nicephorus supposed the ice would prevent
 the Caliph from sending out troops against
 him; and that he might take advantage of
 the season to attack the mussulman territo-
 ries, which were bordering on his dominions,
 he actually sent out a body of troops to
 their frontiers, who put all to fire and sword,
 and returned with a considerable booty.

At the time Nicephorus made the irrup-
 tion, he commanded his embassador to pre-
 sent to the Caliph several swords richly or-
 namented, and of excellent temper, mean-
 ing to let that prince know that for the fu-
 ture he must not expect to receive the stipu-
 lated

lated tribute; and that instead of money, HAROUN.
 he had nothing to send him but weapons. Hegyra 187.
 It is said the Caliph answered this bravado Ch. ær. 803.
 by a feat of strength, at which all the by-
 standers were astonished: he caused the
 swords to be fixed together and stuck into
 the ground, and then cut them all asunder
 with one blow of his cymeter.

But so soon as he received intelligence that The Mussul-
 the emperor was not only resolved to with- men make re-
 hold the tribute, but had also ravaged the prisals.
 frontiers of his dominions, he could not
 contain his resentment; and so soon as the
 season permitted, he caused a formidable
 army to march into Greece, who laid waste
 Bæotia, Romania, and the neighbouring
 provinces. Wheresoever the troops came,
 they left fearful marks of blood and fire.
 They also took an immense booty, and re-
 turned to the mussulman dominions with an
 infinite number of prisoners, whom they
 carried into slavery.

Whilst the land forces were making an
 inroad upon the provinces of the Grecian
 emperor, Haroun sent out a large fleet,
 which made a descent on Cyprus, and
 ruined the whole island. They were pre-
 paring to deal in like manner with the isle
 of Rhodes; but luckily for the Greeks, the
 elements seemed to declare against the Sa-
 racens. A terrible tempest arose, which de-
 stroyed part of their ships; the remainder
 of their fleet took shelter in different ports,

HAROUN.

Hegyra 188.

Ch. ær. 804.

They obtain a
victory over
the Greeks.

where they waited till the weather should be fit for them to put to sea.

Nicephorus still continuing his outrages on the Mussulmen, the Caliph returned the next year upon the Grecian territories, and began to plunder in like manner as he had done the preceding year. The emperor went in person at the head of his troops to oppose Haroun, and offered him battle; the event of which was very unfortunate to the Greeks: they were totally defeated; and Nicephorus had no other means to prevent the Caliph from pushing his advantages, but to sue for peace, and submit to pay the tribute, from the payment of which he would gladly have exempted himself.

Hegyra 189.

Ch. ær. 805.

This new truce was of some considerable duration; during which, Haroun made preparations for marching into Persia, where some commotions had arisen, which threatened an approaching revolt. The false Nicephorus, tho' always beaten by the Caliph, resolved once more to take up arms against him; but concealed his design till that prince had begun his march for Persia.

Hegyra 190.

Ch. ær. 806.

The Greeks
break again
with the Ca-
liph.

He was no sooner informed of Haroun's departure for that expedition, than he took the field and ravaged some of the mussulman provinces. The Caliph, enraged to the last degree against a prince who paid so little regard to the faith of treaties, laid aside his march into Persia; and adding new troops to those he had appointed for that design, he formed

a body of near three hundred thousand men, HAROUN.
and advanced at the head of his numerous Hegyra 190.
army to the Grecian frontiers. Ch. ær. 806.

This campaign was hotter than any of those he had already made against the Greeks: he fully revenged himself on the emperor, by burning all the towns he made himself master of, and putting all the inhabitants to the sword. He vented his chief rage on Heraclea, and the neighbouring cities, which he totally destroyed; and when the Grecian emperor again submitted to make proposals for a peace, the Caliph consented, but he required an augmentation of the tribute; and moreover obliged him to take an oath, that he would not rebuild the towns which the Mussulmen had demolished, and that he would leave the other places in the condition they then were in, without raising any fortifications for their defence.

Peace having been made on these conditions, the Caliph withdrew his troops; and having suffered them to remain some time in quarters of refreshment, he marched into Persia on the enterprize which he had been obliged to suspend the former year, on account of the war with the Greeks.

The troubles which had arisen in Persia, were occasioned by some disputes touching religion. The Zendians (sectaries who have been already mentioned) had gained a great number of followers. As their tenets tended to the destruction of the prophet's

They obtain
peace on hard-
er conditions
than the for-
mer.

Hegyra 191.
Ch. ær. 807.

The Caliph
marches into
Persia.

HAROUN.

Hegyra 191.

Ch. ær. 807.

phet's doctrine, the Caliph at first resolved to send out forces to subdue them, and bring them to an uniformity of faith: but reflecting that men are not formed to think alike, and especially in matters of religion, and that much blood must be spilled in such an attempt, he determined to give them full liberty of conscience, with this exception, that he would severely punish all such sectaries as should make use of religion as a pretence for infringing the laws, or disturbing the peace of the state.

Hegyra 192.

Ch. ær. 808.

He appeases
the troubles.

The Caliph's presence awed the rioters, and soon restored quiet in Persia. He continued there some time to see the effect of the remedies he had applied to put an end to the disturbance; and finding them effectual, he departed from that country, and went to the city of Raccah in Mesopotamia, where he fixed his abode.

He is terrified
by a dream,
which he looks
upon to be an
omen of his
death.

Soon after his arrival there he was seized with a great dejection of spirits, and was filled with apprehensions that he should be attacked by some dangerous distemper: his melancholy arose from a dream. He thought he saw an arm stretched out over his head, and that the hand was filled with red earth; and that he, at the same time, heard a voice distinctly pronounce these words: "This is the earth which is to cover the dead body of Haroun." That a second voice immediately said, "Where is he to be buried?" And that the first voice re-

plied,

plied, "At Thous." The Caliph awaked HAROUN.
 in the greatest terror; and the reflections he Hegyra 192.
 made on his dream filled him with the ut- Ch. ær. 808.
 most disquietude.

His physician strove to dispel his melancholy apprehensions; he assured him that his disorder would easily be cured by a free use of diversions: that his dream arose only from indigestion; that it was no more than a chimera of the mind; that time alone would produce a cure; and that he should only prescribe to him as an effectual remedy, pleasures and a moderate application to business.

The Caliph followed this prescription; A revolt in
 and the fatal impressions made by his dream Samarcand.
 were insensibly dissipated; besides, some affairs of importance happened, which diverted his gloomy ideas. A revolt happened in Samarcand, and also in some of the provinces lying beyond the Oxus. The ringleader of these insurrections was a captain, named Raphius ebn Lith, a man very formidable for his bravery and artful conduct.

The news of this revolt caused a great hurry at the Caliph's court. Haroun sent his principal officers to Raccah, with orders speedily to levy a considerable body of forces, with whom he intended to march in person, in order to stop the progress of the rebels.

So soon as the troops were assembled, he Hegyra 193.
 departed and went by long marches to Geor- Ch. ær. 809.
 gia,

HAROUN.

Hegyra 193.

Ch. ær. 809.

gia, where he thought proper to halt on account of an indisposition which appeared at first to be trifling : but having resumed his march, after some days rest, he went towards Chorasan ; on his arrival there he found himself so weak that he was obliged to stop again, and resolved not to depart thence till he should be perfectly recovered.

The Caliph is
terrified anew
at his dream.

The Caliph having asked the name of the place where he was, no sooner heard it was called Thous, than the melancholy ideas which had disturbed him the preceding year, returned with redoubled force to his mind ; he was filled with fearful apprehensions of his approaching end, and turning to his physician, he said to him with great emotion, “ Dost thou remember what I told thee at Raccah touching my dream ? we are now at Thous, where I am to be buried.” He then ordered Mesfrou, one of his favourite slaves, to go and take up an handful of earth somewhere near the city, and bring it to him.

Mesfrou did as he was commanded, and soon returned to the Caliph. That prince seeing him with his arm bare, and holding an handful of earth of a reddish colour, immediately cried out, “ Alas ! that is the arm, that is the earth I saw in my dream ;” and suddenly his spirits were affected to so great a degree, that his indisposition was greatly heightened. None of the medicines they applied

applied afforded him any relief; infomuch, HAROUN. that having languished a few days, he died and Hegyra 193. was buried at Thous. This prince was then Ch. ær. 809. forty-seven years old, and had reigned about Haroun's twenty-three years. He confirmed by his death. last will the partition he had made of his territories amongst his children, and thereby directed they should fucceffively enjoy the Caliphate.

It is faid that he made fuch a difpofition Friendship in imitation of Charlemain, king of France, between this and emperor of the Weft, who, in a gene- Caliph and ral affembly of the nobles at Thionville, had fhared his dominions amongst his three children, in hopes thereby to eftablifh a lafting peace amongst them. The great character that prince had gained, as well on account of his exploits as of his love for letters, was carried to the utmoft borders of the earth; and Haroun, who had the fame kind of inclinations, contracted a friendship for him, and was pleafed to take him as a model in moft of the regulations he made to reform his people, and eftablifh order in his dominions.

Thofe two princes fent embaffadors to each other, together with mutual presents worthy fovereigns fo rich and powerful. Such of the weftern writers as make mention of their union, call the Caliph Aaron inftead of Haroun (which fignifies the fame in Arabic) and call him king of Perfia.

HAROUN.

Hegyra 193.

Ch. ær. 809.

A modern author* gives the following account of the presents which the Caliph sent to Charlemain.

“ About the same time (the year of Christ 805) came embassadors from Aaron king of Persia, who sent costly presents to the emperor: besides the perfumes, rich stuffs, balms, and aromattick wood, were two very remarkable pieces; the first was a tent of prodigious heighth, containing all the rooms necessary to form a complete apartment. They were disposed according to the manner of the orientals, and lined with the richest silks of Persia. At the end of a noble porch, supported by columns inlaid with plates of gold and silver, a throne was erected, covered with gold and diamonds intermixed, which gave a dazzling lustre: the other was a water-clock† of very uncommon mechanism, considering the age; it was of brass, and struck the hours.

“ The king of Persia,” continues the same author, “ made the emperor another present, which was much more esteemed by him; namely, the property of the holy places, which Aaron offered to that prince. The gift was joyfully accepted; and perhaps from thence some authors have said that Char-

* Father Barre in his General History of Germany, Vol. II. page 490.

† Du Cange in his annals says, that the clock, which was of brass, shewed the hours by the fall of balls of metal on the bell, and by the figures of knights, which opened and shut doors according to the number of hours.

remain conquered the Holy Land ; it was, in AMIN.
 effect, a conquest which his reputation alone Hegyra 193.
 had gained him ; and it contributes more Ch. ær. 809.
 to his glory, that he acquired the city of Je-
 rusalem by such means, than if he had sub-
 dued it by force of arms.

Authors are all agreed in their descrip- Haroun's
 tion of Haroun's person. They represent character.
 him to be tall of stature, of a robust make,
 and of an open and majestick counte-
 nance. As to his character, they look on
 him to be one of the bravest captains of
 the age. He was generous in his expen-
 ces, and above all very liberal to the poor,
 on whom he daily bestowed one hun-
 dred drachmas of silver. He had also a
 remarkable taste for the sciences ; he pro-
 tected learned men, and loved their conver-
 sation. Poets also met with a favourable
 reception at court ; but as he was himself a
 connoisseur in poetry, and also a poet, he
 knew how to judge of their performances,
 and received only such as deserved the
 bays.

A M I N.

The TWENTY-FIFTH CALIPH.

THE next day after Haroun's death,
 Al-Amin, or Amin his eldest son
 was proclaimed Caliph at Thous. This
 prince was then at Bagdat, where he at the
 same

AMIN.

Hegyra 193.

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same time received an account of his father's death, and his own installation.

His true name was Mohammed. Haroun thought fit to give him another, and would have him called Al-Amin, which means The Faithful. It is not said why the Caliph called him so; nor does history afford the least passage to shew he deserved the name.

Amin refuses
to execute his
father's will.

On the contrary, it will appear from his actions that he was remarkably unfaithful, and of this he gave a proof the moment he ascended the throne. Haroun by his will devised the crown to his three sons successively; and moreover, he thereby bequeathed all the furniture in the imperial palace to Mamon his second son, to whom he also gave the absolute property of the government of Chorasan, (of which Haroun had put him in possession,) and directed, that all the troops which were then in that province, should belong to Mamon, and be made use of by him to subdue the rebels who had arisen in Chorasan and Samarcand. These dispositions were made by the late Caliph in his will, which he ratified at his death, and which had been previously confirmed by the grandees of the state, and, in particular, assented to by Amin himself.

But the Caliph was no sooner in possession of the crown, than he resolved he would not perform one article of his father's will. He forthwith commanded all the troops that were

were in Chorasan to return to Bagdat, that AMIN.
 his brother might be deprived of the means Hegyra 193.
 of opposing the steps he was about to take Ch. ær. 809.
 to his prejudice.

It is asserted that Amin did not form this The Caliph
 design himself: he was too fond of plea- addicts himself
 sure to think of his affairs; he passed all his to pleasures.
 time in diversions, and could not bear any
 thing that required the least application.
 This disposition appeared in his most early
 youth. Haroun, who was a great lover of
 the sciences, had endeavoured to instill the
 same inclinations into his children: Amin
 was the only one that disappointed his fa-
 ther's wishes; he absolutely refused to study,
 and all the benefit he reaped from his edu-
 cation was, that he wrote verses tolerably
 well, which was then no very great accom-
 plishment, poetry being, as it were, the na-
 tural idiom of the country. Amin employ-
 ed that talent in chanting forth his love of
 ease and his amours; and when the late Ca-
 liph attempted to prevail on him only to peruse
 a curious work then published, the young
 prince wrote upon it two Arabian verses, the
 meaning of which was, I am wholly taken
 up with my amours; look for some other
 person to study; and he forthwith returned
 the book to his father.

This unhappy inclination to frivolous plea- He gives up
 sures and vain amusements, encreased with the govern-
 his years, and attended him even upon the ment to Fadel
 throne; infomuch, that to avoid interrup- his vizir.
 tion

AMIN. tion in the gratification of them, he gave up
 Hegyra 193. the whole government of the state to a fa-
 Ch. ar. 809. mous Mussulman named Fadel ebn Rabie,
 whom he appointed his chief vizir.

That minister
 sets the Caliph
 and Mamon
 at variance.

That minister had all the qualifications
 necessary for the discharge of so important,
 and at the same time so troublesome an office;
 but he was unfortunately at variance with
 Mamon, the Caliph's brother. He was no
 sooner master of sovereign power, than he
 imposed on the Caliph's indolence, and in
 his name took the most violent steps against
 Mamon, without reflecting that the animos-
 ities he caused between the two brothers
 would inevitably raise great disturbances,
 which might bring the state to the very
 brink of destruction.

It was through the instigations of Fadel,
 that the new Caliph sent orders to withdraw
 the troops from Chorasan; and at the same
 time caused his brother to be informed, that
 as to the furniture and money at Bagdat, he
 had occasion to apply them to other uses
 than those mentioned in his father's will, and
 therefore it would be prudent in him to give
 them up.

Mamon was amazed at a step which gave
 him reason to apprehend worse treatment
 for the future; however, he resolved to dis-
 semble: he made not the least complaint of
 the injury done him, in taking away effects
 he was entitled to under his father's will;
 he also sent back the troops to Bagdat, ac-
 cording

according to the order, reserving only a sufficient body to awe the rebels, who were still in arms in many parts of his government.

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He even did more: he used his utmost endeavours to cause his brother to be proclaimed Caliph throughout Chorasan, and took all possible measures to maintain the people in a state of union, peace, and obedience.

But Fadel, whose rage increased in proportion to the prince's patience, at last struck a blow which brought on Amin's ruin. He exaggerated to the Caliph the affection which the people bore to his brother, and infused into his master a belief that they were so impatient to see Mamon on the throne, according to the directions of his father's will, that it was greatly to be feared they would break out into open rebellion, and endeavour to deprive the Caliph of life, in order to place the crown on Mamon's head.

To prevent so fatal a misfortune, Fadel advised the Caliph of his own authority to annul his father's will, and deprive his brother of all hopes of attaining the Caliphate: to this end he pressed him to cause his son to be recognized as his immediate successor, and assured him, that this step once taken Mamon would be no longer formidable.

Amin causes
his son to be
recognized as
his successor.

Amin, a weak prince, who chose rather to trust implicitly to his minister, than take the pains of examining any measures that were proposed to him, resolved to comply

Hegyra 194.
Ch. ær. 810.

AMIN.

Hegyra 194.
Ch. ær. 810.

with Fadel's advice, and accordingly the vizir prepared to carry his design into execution.

It was a custom amongst the Arabians, for the Imam in the publick prayers on Friday to name the Caliph, and next to him his presumptive heir, or immediate successor, and till that time Mamon had been mentioned next after the Caliph. Fadel caused Mamon's name to be omitted, and substituted to it that of the son of Amin, who was then but a child; he gave him the firname of Nathek-Belhak, which signifies, Arguing according to God and the Truth.

This degradation of Mamon did not make much noise at Bagdat: Fadel's friends and creatures were there; such as did not love him were afraid of his resentment, and therefore dared not oppose the change, so that the least disturbance did not happen. Some merry wags indeed thought fit to change the firname given to Amin's son into that of Natha-Billah, that is to say, He who by the grace of God has just begun to speak.

He deprives
Motassem of
the govern-
ment of Me-
sopotamia.

Fadel, not satisfied with depriving Mamon of his just right, also vented his fury on Motassem, the Caliph's youngest brother: he deprived him of the government of Mesopotamia, and at the same time prevailed on the Caliph to write to Mamon, and order him to come instantly to Bagdat: but the prince, enraged to receive so many injuries on the back of one another, lost all pa-

tience ; and far from going to Bagdat according to the summons, he sent back word to his brother, that Haroun his father, having intrusted him with the government of Chorasan, he could by no means absent himself from his command, without leaving it at the mercy of the rebels who were kept in awe by his presence.

AMIN.

Hegyra 194.
Ch. ær. 810.

In a short time Mamon suppressed the post, and put a stop to all communication between Bagdat and Chorasan ; and immediately after this open rupture, he took a step which plainly shewed it would be impossible to effect a reconciliation, and that the dispute could only be ended by the destruction of one of the two competitors. He caused the name of Amin to be erased from the publick coin, and his own name to be put in its stead. This attack upon the rights of the sovereign gave room for many reflections, and it soon appeared he had then but one step to take, in order openly to place the crown on his own head.

Mamon openly breaks with the Caliph.

How bold soever this conduct of Mamon might be, yet not a person in Chorasan opposed or even censured it. He was adored by all the people under his command, whose happiness he made it his chief care to promote ; and they were enraged to see the Caliph act so basely and cruelly towards a brother, who was at the same time endeavouring to promote and establish his interest in that province. So soon, therefore, as he had

He is beloved by the people.

AMIN.

Hegyra 194.
Ch. ær. 810.

openly declared himself, they seemed unanimously inclined to support him, and even gave him to understand, that the whole province was ready to take up arms in his behalf the moment he should issue his orders for that purpose.

Hegyra 195.
Ch. ær. 811.The Caliph
declares war
against him.

Mamon was the better pleased to find the people so strongly inclined to his interest, as he had soon occasion of their assistance to oppose his brother Amin. This prince, who was doubly enraged, both because he could not get Mamon into his power, and also on account of the insult committed by him, in suppressing the coin struck in his name, declared open war against him, and caused an army of sixty thousand men to march towards Chorasan, under the command of Ali-ben-Iffa.

Mamon ap-
points Thaher
to command
his army.

Mamon having soon received intelligence of the march of these troops, availed himself of the affections of the people in raising an army capable of making head against his brother's forces; but having advised with a famous captain named Thaher, and whom he proposed to trust with the command of his army, touching the future operations of the campaign, that general advised him not to rely on the numbers but the goodness of his soldiers; and he assured Mamon, that if he would intirely leave the matter to him, he would with only four thousand chosen troops beat the enemy's army, or so roughly handle it,

it, as to leave it in a situation very little different from a defeat.

AMIN.

Hegyra 195.

Ch. ær. 811.

Mamon, who knew Thaher to be one of the greatest captains of the age, gave him discretionary orders. The general having made choice of the four thousand men, put himself at their head, and advanced with all expedition towards the town of Rei, about which he knew Issa had pitched his camp. He came in sight of that general at about ten leagues distance from the city, and boldly marched up to him in order of battle.

Issa seeing him appear with such a handful of troops, thought he need not give himself much trouble about them: he did not even condescend to answer the challenge on the spot, reckoning that he could at any time reduce so trifling a detachment; and full of this opinion, he made use of no precautions: he wasted his moments in walking over his camp, and visiting the posts, and from time to time made merry with his officers at the expence of Thaher, for having so audaciously appeared with so small a body of men in presence of so numerous an army.

But Issa did not consider, that Thaher's detachment was composed of resolute men, capable of the boldest enterprizes; and that although he had possibly no reason to be apprehensive of an immediate attack, yet he might be over-reached by a surprize; and so it actually fell out. Issa going frequently from one of his posts to another, very

Issa, the Caliph's general, is killed.

AMIN,

Hegyra 195.

Ch. ær. 811.

slightly guarded, one of Thaher's soldiers named Dadon, and surnamed Siah, because he was a black man, prevailed on some of his comrades to assist him in a bold design he had formed to seize that general's person. Dadon and his companions having found means to get into a hollow way covered with bushes, approached the enemy's camp, and the general passing by, Dadon rushed out on him, and unhorsed him before any proper relief could come. In this extremity Issa declared who he was, expecting that the soldier would have given him quarter, in hopes of a considerable ransom; but Dadon was deaf to his proposal, and cutting off his head with one blow of his cymeter, he carried it to his general.

The Caliph's
army dis-
peres.

This event spread such an alarm amongst the Caliph's troops, that they for the most part quitted their colours, and refused to fight with such desperate enemies: the officers vainly strove to recover them from this panick, but they would not listen to their remonstrances, and retired precipitately.

Thaher, delighted that he had gained so easy a victory, immediately dispatched a courier to Mamon, with an account of that important event, and he at the same time sent him the head of the enemy's general; and returning shortly with his detachment to Chorasan, he assured Mamon he might boldly undertake any thing against such a prince as Amin, whose indolence and cowardice seemed

seemed to have infected his soldiers, and AMIN. even his very generals.

Mamon now thought it high time to throw off all reserve; and he from thenceforth took a resolution of causing himself to be proclaimed Caliph. His intentions were no sooner publicly known, than the people unanimously intreated that prince no longer to delay taking possession of a crown, which his brother was unworthy to wear. Mamon yielded to their intreaties, and was acknowledged Caliph in all the places under his government.

Hegyra 196.
Ch. ær. 812.

Mamon is
proclaimed
Caliph.

The news of this revolution put the whole court of Bagdat in motion. Amin was the only person who seemed unmoved at it, and shewed the same indifference at the news, as he made appear at the time he was informed of the death of his general and the dissipation of his troops: for an author relates, that when the Caliph heard of that defeat, he was taking the diversion of fishing with one of his favourites named Kouter, and that he answered to the messenger who brought the news, "Ah! why do you come to disturb me? Kouter has caught two fine fishes since we have been here, and I have not yet been able to catch one."

The Caliph is
insensible of
his misfortune.

Even the proclamation of his brother was not able to wean him from his amusements, insomuch, that the indifference he shewed at that occurrence drew on him the contempt and indignation of his subjects in general:

AMIN.

Hegyra 196.

Ch. ær. 812.

nor was their resentment less against Fadel the first minister, who by imposing on that weak and indolent prince, had blown up the coals of discord, which were like to consume the whole mussulman state, only to gratify the private pique and malice which that vizir had conceived against Mamon.

Mamon causes
two armies to
take different
routes.

The Caliph being therefore unable to do any thing of himself, Fadel caused troops to be raised, and proposed to march into Chorasan to prevent Mamon from establishing his authority; but as it was too late to think of attacking him, it was now absolutely necessary for him to take measures to defend himself; for so soon as the people had taken the oath of allegiance to Mamon, he caused two armies to take the field, the one of them commanded by the brave Thaher, and the other by a captain of great renown called Harthamath: those two generals taking each of them a different route, advanced by speedy marches into the very heart of the Caliph's dominions, before they had taken a final resolution for the departure of the troops which they proposed to send out against Mamon.

The armies
join and take
Hamadan.

The two armies being joined, immediately undertook the siege of Hamadan, a considerable place, which seemed resolved to make a stout resistance. The besieged defended themselves with great bravery, and for some time stopped the progress of the two generals; but at last the attacks were pushed on with so much vigour, that the besieged

sieged could no longer withstand the efforts of the enemy, and were forced to surrender.

AMIN.

Hegyra 196.

Ch. ær. 812.

This alarming news, which plainly foretold the speedy arrival of the enemy at the gates of Bagdat, made not the least impression upon Amin. When they brought him an account that Mamon's troops were approaching, and that the scouts of his army made their excursions into the very neighbourhood of his capital, that prince, who was then playing at chess with his favourite, answered with great unconcern, "Pri-thee, let me alone; I am just going to strike a great stroke; I desire I may not be interrupted; I shall this moment give Kouter, check-mate."

Indolence of the Caliph.

So ill-timed and preposterous an answer, rendered all that prince's subjects disaffected to him. Satyrs were continually wrote against him; and some verses in particular were handed about, the meaning of which was, "That a prince who passes whole nights at play, condemns himself and his state to inevitable destruction. The sun declines," continues the poet, "so soon as he has entered the sign of Libra, because he has left the sign of Virgo, where he sojourned in the house of sports and dancing*."

He is ridiculed and contemned.

But the greatest part of his subjects took the matter in a more serious light; and en-

* This fact alludes to the manner in which Arabian astronomers represent the sign of Virgo; they describe her with a lyre in her hand, some give her only an ear of corn.

raged

AMIN.

Hegyra 196.
Ch. ær. 812.

raged to see the stupid supineness of their sovereign in a matter on which the fate of his capital depended, they resolved to take away the crown from a prince so unworthy to wear it.

Hegyra 197.
Ch. ær. 813.Amin is de-
posed from the
Caliphate.

Amin was actually deposed from the Caliphate, and they were on the point of sending a deputation to the enemy's generals, to inform them that they were ready to acknowledge Mamon as Caliph, when by a sudden event the face of affairs was changed.

Mamon's
troops muti-
ny.

At the time Thaher was beginning his approaches against Bagdat, and giving orders for the works necessary to invest the place, the troops mutinied for want of pay; the funds proved deficient, and they could not possibly procure money enough to satisfy the soldiers. This misfortune had like to have ruined Mamon's affairs, for his army refused to continue the works.

Amin regains
the hearts of
the people,
and is restored.

Fadel, Amin's vizir, prevailed on his master to take advantage of that incident to regain the affections of the inhabitants of Bagdat: he procured him considerable sums of money, which were privately distributed amongst Mamon's troops, to keep up their disobedience to their chief officers; this expedient succeeded to Fadel's wish. The inhabitants of Bagdat, moved to see the prince they had just so ignominiously deposed, thus freely sacrifice his riches to secure them from the attempts of their enemies, blamed themselves for having treated him with so much

much rigour, and made amends for their error by restoring him to the throne.

AMIN.

Hegyra 197.

Ch. ær. 813.

But the mutiny of Mamon's army was of no long continuance : Thaher and Harthamath took such great pains, that they soon provided money enough to pay the troops ; and the soldiers returning to their duty, they heartily resumed the operations of the siege, which was pushed on so vigorously, that the city being soon reduced to the utmost extremity, was forced to yield to the victor.

Bagdat surrenders to Thaher.

When Thaher took possession of the place, he expected to make Amin prisoner ; but his vizir had provided for his escape : and it was soon known he had retired to a neighbouring place, where he thought he might remain in safety, imagining that when the enemy were once masters of the capital, they would not think of pursuing him ; but in this his hopes failed him.

So soon as Thaher had secured Bagdat, and taken the oaths of the inhabitants to Ma-

Hegyra 198.

Ch. ær. 813.

mon, he departed, together with Harthamath, to besiege Amin in the place to which he had fled for shelter. That prince, who had neither courage nor force enough to resist so potent an adversary, resolved to provide for his safety by surrendering on terms ; but instead of applying to Thaher, and treating with him, he sent messengers to Harthamath, who promised to use him with all the respect due to his rank.

Amin is besieged in his place of refuge.

The

AMIN.

Hegyra 198.
Ch. ær. 813.The preference he gives
to Harthamath causes
his destruction.

The preference which Amin gave to Harthamath, was the cause of his destruction : his friends foresaw it ; and when he communicated to them his design, they used all the means in their power to prevent him from putting it in execution : they represented to him, that Thaher being commander in chief, no treaty could be valid unless it was signed by him ; that besides, as the general was a proud, imperious man, he would certainly think himself ill used by the choice, and revenge himself severely on that account.

Amin agreed that their reasons were well founded ; but he had entertained so strong an opinion of Thaher's haughtiness and inflexibility, that he would by no means treat with him. This opinion arose from a dream he had during the time of the negotiation ; he told his friends, that in his sleep he thought he was sitting on the top of a thick strong wall, and that Thaher was undermining it to draw him towards him by its fall : this dream had a greater effect than all their arguments ; and having received from Harthamath the safeguard he required, he prepared to put himself into the hands of that general.

Disputes arise
between the
two commanders.

The treaty of Amin with Harthamath, had raised a great dispute between the two commanders : Thaher alledged, that as he was general in chief, the application ought to have been made to him. At last, after many altercations, it was agreed that Amin should

should surrender to Harthamath, and that AMIN.
 he should previously put into the hands Hegyra 198.
 of Thaher the ornaments of the crown, Ch. ær. 813.
 namely, the seal, the sceptre, and the robe.

These conditions were agreed to on both Thaher's
 sides; but through some caprice (which is troops lay in
 not mentioned) the timorous Amin did not ambush to
 observe the chief article, which was to per- seize Amin.
 form his promise to Thaher, whom he look-
 ed upon to be his personal enemy. That
 general having been informed, that the Ca-
 liph intended secretly to pass the Tygris in
 order to go to Harthamath, and that he pro-
 posed to resign the imperial ornaments into
 the hands of that general, Thaher, enraged at
 this procedure, resolved to revenge it on Amin
 himself: he accordingly placed some of his
 troops in ambush on the banks of the river;
 and when the boat, wherein the Caliph was,
 came within bow-shot, they made a general
 discharge upon it. The persons who accom-
 panied Amin, being thrown into the utmost
 confusion, arose up, and by their great num-
 bers, and by the attempts they made to avoid
 the darts, stones, and burning torches, which
 were thrown at them, they overset the boat,
 and every one was forced to strive to save
 himself by swimming.

Amin was watched by Thaher's soldiers,
 who followed him a long time down the
 banks of the river; at last that prince came
 to land near a garden which he knew, and
 went to take shelter there: but the enemy's
 soldiers

AMIN.

Hegyra 198.

Ch. ær. 813.

soldiers soon came up to him, and having seized him, they mounted him on a cart-horse, and carried him to the house of a Mussulman named Ibrahim, where he was closely guarded by a part of them, whilst the residue ran to inform the general that the prince was taken.

Amin is killed
by order of
Thaher.

Thaher sent them back on the spot with one of his officers, and commanded them to give no quarter to Amin, but to kill him so soon as they should return. The unfortunate prince seeing them enter the chamber he was in with their swords drawn, no longer doubted of his approaching end; however, he argued with them touching the fact they were about to commit. "Woe be to you," said he to them, "if you shed my blood; remember I am the son of Haroun, and brother to Mamon your sovereign."

He was doubtless in hopes of moving them by recalling to their minds the great character of his father, and still more by the kind of renunciation he made of the crown, by mentioning Mamon as their sovereign: but they were inexorable; and the officer whom Thaher had sent, advancing up to Amin, smote him with his sword, and gave him a desperate wound in the face. Amin not having any arms, threw a cushion (the first thing he could lay hands on) at the person who gave him the blow, and seizing him round the middle, attempted to wrest his sword from him, in order to defend himself against
the

the others ; but in the mean time, a soldier AMIN.
 getting behind him gave him a wound in the Hegyra 198.
 back, which disabled him : his head was then Ch. ær. 813.
 forthwith struck off, and carried to the general, who having exposed it a whole day to the publick view of the troops, sent it to Mamon, as a proof of the victory he had obtained.

Such was the unhappy end of the Caliph Amin's character.
 Amin, a prince absolutely unfit to reign, on account of his effeminate life, his indolence and cowardice. The term of his life was not more than twenty-nine years, and of his reign only four. El Makin says he was tall, well-shaped, and of an agreeable countenance ; that his shoulders were broad, his eyes small, his complexion fair, his temples bald, and the hair of his head very thin and lank. As to his character, the same author tells us he was a very liberal prince ; and liberality was in all probability his only virtue : for in other respects he speaks of him as a very blood-thirsty man, without resolution, without courage, and without any of those qualities which are the characteristicks of a good sovereign.

MAMON.

MAMON.

Hegyra 198.

Ch. ær. 813.

M A M O N.

The TWENTY-SIXTH CALIPH.

MAMON, or Al-Mamon, the son of Haroun-al-Rashid, and brother of Amin, ascended the throne after the death of the latter, and appeared to be possessed of qualities very different to those of his weak predecessor.

This prince was a lover of virtue; he protected men of integrity and learning. The wise laws and prudent regulations made by Haroun, which had not been duly carried into execution under the reign of Amin, resumed their former vigour under the Caliphate of Mamon; and by his great care the sciences attained such a degree of perfection as hath rendered his memory immortal.

It must however be confessed, that though he possessed all the good qualities that could make him worthy of a crown, yet in the beginning of his reign he committed faults which raised terrible disturbances in the state; disturbances almost as fatal as those which rent the empire during the reign of the indolent Amin; but in time he put an end to them, and for his prudent conduct deserved to be considered as one of the greatest princes that ever filled the mussulman throne.

The

The great liberality with which he rewarded the services of Thaher his general, and the unlimited confidence he placed in his prime minister, were two essential faults, which caused him the utmost vexation.

MAMON.

Hegyra 198.
Ch. ær. 813.

The Caliph gives the government of Chorasan to Thaher.

Mamon, instead of treating his general as a man for whom he had the highest esteem, but still as one of his subjects, made him, as it were, his equal; or which amounts to the same thing, put that officer in a condition of one day disputing the sovereignty with him. That prince gave him the government of Chorasan, and the provinces annexed to it: he made the government hereditary in Thaher's family, and only reserved to himself the right of giving the investiture.

Such was the gift which the Caliph bestowed on Thaher, as a recompence for his services, at the time the general came to give him an account of the expedition, in which the unhappy Amin lost both his crown and his life; but as Mamon then resided in Chorasan, Thaher did not take possession of the government till the Caliph departed from that province in order to be recognized at Bagdat.

He delayed this ceremony a long time; during that interval the mussulman empire was filled with intestine divisions. The Caliph alone was the cause of them; not indeed on account of his absence from his capital, but because he was entirely at

Hegyra 199.
Ch. ær. 814.

He makes Fadel his vizir, and intrusts him with the whole administration.

MAMON.

Hegyra 199.

Ch. ær. 814.

the devotion of a minister whom he had intrusted with the whole administration.

This minister was called Fadel ebn So-hail : he was a man of great merit and skill in publick affairs. The Caliph, who well knew his worth, had long gained him over to his interest ; and so soon as he was seated on the throne, he honoured him with the title of vizir, and to his conduct he left the whole government of the state. Being then free from all cares, he closely applied himself to the sciences, for which he had the greatest fondness, and never interfered with Fadel in the management of publick affairs, or the direction of his own private concerns.

Hegyra 200.

Ch. ær. 815.

The vizir's inclination to the Alians.

Unfortunately that minister was engaged in a party diametrically opposite to the Caliph's interest: he had ever been devoted to the Alians ; but as he was a man of great prudence and artifice, he easily concealed his sentiments. He always affected a great shew of zeal to the Abassians, and they had shewed a great regard for him. Haroun honoured him with his esteem, and took a pleasure in often conversing with him. On the death of that Caliph, finding the crown was fallen to a prince who was neither capable of distinguishing, nor likely to reward men of merit, he left the court and went into Chorasan to Mamon. He soon gained an entire ascendancy over the mind of that prince ; and when he found himself fixed in

in his good graces, he insensibly prevailed on MAMON.
him to favour, or at least not to persecute, Hegyra 200.
Ch. ær. 815.
the Alians in the manner his predecessors
had done.

But so soon as Mamon had ascended the He introduces
Rizza to court.
throne, and given up all power into his
hands, Fadel began to speak more openly
to that prince in favour of the Alians.
Amongst other things, he was lavish in his
praises of Ali the son of Musa, who was
commonly called the Imam Rizza : he ex-
tolled his piety, his wisdom, and above all
his great knowledge, and his taste both for
letters and learned men : in short, he spoke
of him so often, and so advantageously, that
the Caliph had a great desire to see him.

Fadel soon sent for Rizza to court, and Hegyra 201.
Ch. ær. 816.
introduced him to Mamon, who being al-
ready prejudiced in his favour, gave him a
most gracious reception.

The vizir well pleased to find his first step He induces
the Caliph to
protect the
Alians.
had proved so successful, resolved to venture
on another, which was attended with the
like success. He had formed a design of
restoring the Alians to the Caliphate ; and he
began to remonstrate to Mamon how much
that illustrious family was to be pitied, for
having been exposed to the hatred of those
who had so long possessed the throne. He
exaggerated the unjust dealings of the Om-
miyans towards them, and shewed they had
so warmly persecuted the Alians, only from
a consciousness of their incontestable right to

MAMON.

Hegyra 201.

Ch. ær. 816.

the crown; and finally, he represented how much it would redound to the honour of an Abassian prince, to afford at least a sure asylum to the Alians, and thereby in some sort to make them amends for the loss of a throne, which would have been their property, had any regard been paid to reason or equity.

This kind of argument having been often repeated with great art and skill, at last made a deep impression upon the Caliph; and Rizza's personal good qualities, inclined him to take the Alians into his favour. He condemned the cruelty of the Caliphs, his predecessors, who had shed so much blood in order to root out so honourable a family; and made no secret of the inclinations he entertained of using all possible means to make amends for so great a piece of injustice.

It was soon known throughout the whole mussulman empire, that there was a prince of the race of Ali at the Caliph's court, who was treated with all the honours due to his birth. Mamon's conduct, in that respect, gave room for much discourse, which was either favourable or unfavourable to him, according as the persons stood affected to the Alians: but in general, all sensible men blamed the Caliph for bestowing so kind a treatment on a family who could do them no service, but on the contrary would certainly raise the greatest disturbances in

the state, if after having been so many times MAMON.
massacred there were still left young shoots Hegyra 201.
enough to form a party. Ch. ær. 816.

Their suspicions soon appeared to be well A descendant
founded: and news was brought that an of Ali is pro-
Alian named Mahomet, who called himself claimed Ca-
the son of Ibrahim, who was great grand- liph at Cufah.
son of Ali, appeared in arms at Cufah; that
the people of that city, who were so well
known for their fickleness and inconstancy,
had joined him, and had actually raised that
prince to the throne.

So bold a step might have caused Mamon
seriously to reflect on the protection he had
granted to Rizza, contrary to the interest of his
house and the families of the empire in ge-
neral; however, that prince blinded by the
continual insinuations of his minister, and
seduced by the personal merit of Rizza,
persisted in keeping at court, and giving him
marks of the greatest favour.

But in a short time he took a step of still The Caliph
greater consequence; he openly declared in declares in fa-
favour of the Alians, and to put it out of vour of the
all doubt, he laid aside the black turban, Alians, and
which was the colour of the Abassians, and makes Rizza
assumed the green, the distinguishing colour his colleague
of the Alians: he commanded his courtiers in the empire.
and his troops also to wear the green tur-
ban. He at the same time gave his daugh-
ter Abiba to wife to Rizza, and finally de-
clared him his colleague in the empire. Tha-
her was appointed by the Caliph to put that

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Hegyra 201.
Ch. ær. 816.

prince in possession of the throne. It is related, that when the general came to perform that office, he offered to Rizza only his left hand, saying to him: "My right hand placed Mamon upon the throne; and it is a great pleasure to me now with my left hand to place thereon such an Imam as you are." Rizza politely replied, "That such a left hand was better than the right hand of any other person."

The installation of Rizza did not produce the same effect in all parts of the empire: at Chorasan they thought it was a very bold step, which might be attended with fatal consequences; but they were so habituated to obey Mamon, and he had so gained their affections, that they did not openly inveigh against his design.

The Abassians
depose Ma-
mon, and elect
Ibrahim.

But things did not go on so smoothly at Bagdat and in the neighbouring provinces. There the Abassians had fixed their residence; and that family was then so very numerous, that an author says they amounted to thirty thousand souls. It is easy to judge what temper they were in when they heard that the mussulman throne, the acquisition of which had cost their house so much blood, was about to be transmitted to another family, contrary to the settlement made by Haroun, and ratified by all the chief men of the state, who had taken an oath to confer the crown on the three children of that Caliph successively. They bitterly

terly complained of Mamon's proceedings ; MAMON.
and those complaints reiterated, soon occasioned an insurrection against that prince.

It was unanimously agreed on at Bagdat Hegyra 202.
to depose him from the Caliphate ; but they Ch. ær. 817.
were a little at a loss to fix on a proper person to succeed him : some of the Abassians were for setting the crown on Motasssem's head, according to the directions of Haroun's will ; but it having been urged, that the prince was not yet old enough to govern of himself, their voices all concurred in favour of Ibrahim ebn Mahadi, uncle to Mamon. Having taken this resolution they deposed Mamon, and solemnly proclaimed Ibrahim. This prince, who was fond of peace and retirement, would have been much better pleased if they had not made choice of him, and especially at a juncture when such great troubles were likely to ensue ; but he was forced to comply with the request of the Abassians, and the tumultuous clamours of the inhabitants of Bagdat, who would not tamely have borne his refusal.

The news of this revolution was soon Mamon levies
brought to Chorasan : Fadel, who had troops to at-
caused this disturbance by his pernicious tack his rival
counsel, was resolved to maintain his design ; and he even prevailed on Mamon to go to Bagdat at the head of his army, to attack the Abassian who had been so rash as to accept the Caliphate, and sword in hand

MAMON.

to compel the inhabitants of that city to comply with his will.

Hegyra 202.

Ch. ær. 817.

Mamon, who still blindly followed the way into which he was put by his vizir, departed from Chorasan with a numerous army, and took the road to Bagdat, accompanied by his colleague and Fadel his minister, bearing, as it were in triumph, Ali's livery on their turbans.

Thus that prince, who was formed to make his subjects completely happy, was on the point of openly attacking them, in order to punish them for a crime of which he was the chief occasion; but an event happened on the road, which luckily prevented the misfortunes with which the empire was menaced.

Hegyra 203.

Ch. ær. 818.

Rizza's death.

Mamon having halted at Thous to refresh his troops, his beloved Rizza fell sick: some say his malady was occasioned by his having eaten too many grapes; others assert, that some of Mamon's courtiers, enraged to see that prince sully his glory, and run the risk of ruining his dominions for the sake of an Alian, resolved to make away with Rizza by poison, and that they succeeded in their design: but which way soever it was, all the helps of physick were ineffectual, and in a few days he died at Thous.

This loss was a severe blow on Mamon: he loved Rizza, who really merited his regard on many accounts, and few princes were to be found who were masters of so many

many eminent qualifications. The Caliph MAMON. being able to give no further proofs of his Hegyra 203. affection, ordered a magnificent funeral to Ch. ær. 818. be made, and buried him at Thous, near Haroun his father, who was interred, as has been already observed, in that city.

Mamon departed from Thous as soon as he possibly could, and continued his march towards Bagdat; but on his approach to that city, an event happened which afforded him fresh cause of grief, but which at the same time was the cause of his own happiness and the safety of his subjects.

Fadel, who still continued his attachment Fadel is assassi- to the Alians, was not disconcerted at the nated. loss of Rizza; his imagination, fertile in expedients, soon found the means of reviving that party, and he incensed the Caliph more than ever against all such as made the least attempt to oppose his design: but so many of the Caliph's honest subjects were disgusted at the vizir's base and artful conduct, that they resolved to get rid of that troublesome man, whose base proceedings tended to set the whole monarchy into a flame. He was accordingly assassinated by his own servants, and his death suddenly changed the face of affairs.

Mamon was at first quite overwhelmed by this blow; he had lost his friend, his counsellor, in a word, an able minister, who eased him from the burthen of governing; through him he only saw and heard: in losing him he thought himself to be in a most
lonely

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Hegyra 203.

Ch. ær. 818.

lonely condition, which renewed his grief for his former loss.

However, being then forced to take the management of affairs into his own hands, he was obliged to use his utmost endeavours to shake off his affliction; in time his sorrows abated: his eyes were soon opened as to the imprudent steps he had been prevailed on to take; and, at last, truth appearing without disguise, he plainly saw to how great a degree he had been imposed on.

The inhabitants of Bagdat depose Ibrahim.

As he was of an upright mind, and above all had an honest heart, he was not ashamed to confess he had committed an error; and he took the most speedy measures to make amends for his fault. He was encouraged in that noble design by a step then taken by the inhabitants of Bagdat. So soon as they were informed that Rizza and Fadel were dead, they did not entertain the least doubt that Mamon, now he was left to himself, would have a due regard for his family, as well as for the Mussulmen in general; and that, by returning to their obedience, they should receive the same marks of favour and kindness from him, as he had bestowed on the people of Chorasan during the time he presided over that province.

Hegyra 204.

Ch. ær. 819.

They therefore resolved to depose Ibrahim, and to send a deputation to Mamon, to inform him that they were ready again to acknowledge him as their lawful Caliph. The obliging manner with which that prince received

received their promises of submission gave MAMON.
 them the greatest pleasure ; but by quitting Hegyra 204.
 the green turban to assume the black, he Ch. ær. 819.
 gained all their hearts : the courtiers, the
 officers, and also the troops in general, fol-
 lowed the example of their prince, and threw
 off the livery of the Alians.

Thus Mamon made his publick entry into
 Bagdat. The loud acclamations of the peo-
 ple were a manifest proof of the great joy
 they felt at his presence : all appearances of
 a disturbance were at an end, and he began
 peaceably to enjoy the honours of the Ca-
 liphate.

Soon after his entrance into Bagdat, he
 was desirous of seeing his uncle Ibrahim,
 whom the people had just deposed ; but it
 was not with a view to punish him for his
 crime in presuming to ascend the throne : it
 will appear by the sequel, that Mamon did
 not entertain the least resentment against
 him on that account, and was only desirous
 of knowing where he was, that he might
 call him to court. But Ibrahim being re-
 solved to conceal himself, took such effectual
 methods for his security, that notwithstand-
 ing the strict search made after him, he re-
 mained many years in Bagdat without being
 discovered. As he accepted of the crown
 with reluctance, he quitted it without re-
 gret, and chose rather to lead a peaceful
 retired life, than to be any longer subject to
 the cares and sollicitudes which usually at-
 tend

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tend elevated stations, and especially when affairs are so situated as his happened to be.

Hegyra 205.

Ch. ær. 820.

Thaher is pro-
claimed sove-
reign in Cho-
rafan.

Whilst the inhabitants of Bagdat were daily giving fresh proofs of their affection and obedience to Mamon (to the great satisfaction of that Caliph) he had fresh cause of grief, which arose from the error he had committed in bestowing the property of Chora-fan on Thaher, reserving to the Caliphs only the right of investiture. So soon as Mamon left that province, the governor had so disposed the minds of the inhabitants in his own favour, that he was raised to the sovereignty of the country, and he alledged, that he held of no superior lord; but, in order to avoid irritating such as were still devoted to Mamon, he pretended that the sovereignty he had assumed, was a gift the Caliph had made to him as a reward for his important services, and that it was the prince's will he should enjoy all the privileges and prerogatives thereto belonging: by degrees he raised his pretensions, and at last he went so far as to cause himself to be named alone in the publick prayers; and he absolutely caused the Caliph's name to be laid aside in all the provinces under his command.

Hegyra 206.

Ch. ær. 821.

Though this attempt was sufficient to provoke the Caliph to take up arms to subdue that rebel, yet Mamon could not prevail on himself to arm the Mussulmen against each other; and he rather chose to permit Thaher peaceably to enjoy the fruits of his rebellion,
flattering

flattering himself that time and reflection MAMON.
 would bring him back to his duty : but Ma- Hegyra 206.
 mon was deceived in his hopes ; Tha- Ch. ær. 821.
 her continued to maintain himself in Chorasan ;
 he held it as the absolute sovereign, and form-
 ed a kind of Dynasty, which his descendants
 kept up with great splendor almost sixty
 years. As to him, he died of an acute di-
 sease about two years after he had suppressed
 the Caliph's name in the publick prayers.

Mamon therefore concluding that Tha-
 her's pretensions would fall of themselves,
 was in no haste to take revenge. He thought
 himself happy to see peace and tranquillity
 established in all the other provinces of his do-
 minions. The Alians who had ventured to
 make their appearance at the time the Ca-
 liph had declared in favour of their family,
 fled to their hiding-places so soon as they
 heard of the revolution which had happened
 in Bagdat on the day of Mamon's entry there.
 Mahomet the Alian, who had broke out into
 rebellion at Cufah, and been proclaimed Ca-
 liph in that city, had withdrawn himself ;
 insomuch that Mamon's authority was firmly
 established in all the provinces of the sarace-
 nick empire, except in Chorasan.

The many revolutions which happened in
 the empire of the East, having found the
 Greeks so much employment at home, that
 they could not think of engaging in any fo-
 reign expeditions, they submitted to pay to
 the Caliph the usual tribute : Mamon took
 advantage

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Hegyra 206.

Ch. ær. 821.

Mamon strives
to cause the
sciences to
flourish in his
capital.

advantage of this calm to make the sciences flourish in the capital of his dominions.

They had been held in high esteem there ever since the Abassians had begun to reign. Almanzor had openly protected them. Haroun followed his example, and not only protected, but also cultivated them with great care. Mamon exceeded his predecessors, and gained immortal glory by the pains he took to facilitate the progress of letters, and on account of the immense sums he expended to draw into his dominions foreigners who were distinguished for their great learning and knowledge.

That prince caused publick schools to be erected, in which were convenient lodgings for the men of learning, whom he appointed to give lectures on all the sciences. He, at the same time, founded an academy, where the learned held their assemblies to debate on points of literature, which were fit only to be discussed by eminent masters.

In order to increase the inclination of the Arabians for the sciences, Mamon was often present at the assemblies of the learned; he even visited the schools, and took a pleasure in hearing their disputations upon the questions then under debate. The respect he shewed to the professors, gained them greater attention from all such as attended their lectures. Far from considering them as men that executed a mean employment, he treated them with the utmost distinction; he ad-
mitted

mitted them to his court, conversed familiarly with them, and commonly called them, MAMON. Hegyra 206. Ch. ær. 821. The Masters of the Soul, and the Preceptors of the Human Mind. They were, he said, men privileged by heaven, born to be the light of nations, and to dispel the clouds of ignorance, which is the mother of barbarity and cruelty.

A great number of learned men appeared at this time at Bagdat; the most part of whom had been invited by the Caliph, and the residue came on the sole report of his love for the sciences, and the protection he granted to such as cultivated them. The conversation of these literati renewed in the courtiers a taste for letters; and the capital of the Mussulmen soon became, as it were, a publick school, in which the strongest emulation appeared, a sure means of encouraging the sciences, and carrying them to the highest degree of perfection. The knowledge of medicine, physicks, morality, metaphysicks, and astronomy; in a word, of all the useful sciences, was closely pursued by the Caliph, the lords of his court, and such other persons as had an opportunity of engaging in such kinds of study.

Mamon more and more encouraged these happy beginnings by the rewards he conferred on such as distinguished themselves, and to facilitate the progress of their studies, he devoted immense sums to the raising of magnificent buildings, some of which
were

MAMON.

Hegyra 206.

Ch. ær. 821.

were designed for publick libraries, where every one might go and freely enjoy the treasures of literature, which he collected from all parts: others were set apart for the progress of certain particular sciences; for example, he caused an observatory to be built, where such as followed astronomy might prosecute their studies with the greater conveniency, as they found every thing necessary for that purpose.

Mamon soon reaped the fruits of his labour; authors of all kinds appeared, who gained the highest reputation, and contributed to spread abroad the glory of the prince who so generously protected them: such as Abbas of Mèru, a famous calculator, who drew up some astronomical tables with great exactness; Ahmed ebn Cothair, who corrected Ptolomy's tables, and published them with learned notes and remarks; and many others, as well Mussulmen as Jews and Christians, who all shared alike in the friendship and favours of the Caliph; for that prince was not of opinion, that a difference in matters of religion ought to prevent him from extending his liberality to men who were so great an honour to literature.

Hegyra 207.

Ch. ær. 822.

Thomas solicits the Caliph to make war on the Greeks.

The tranquillity which the Caliph enjoyed in so pleasing an employment, was a little interrupted by the war he that year carried on against the Greeks; however, he did not head his army, and only furnished a body of troops to the person that was the *primum mobile*

mobile of that war; he was a Grecian MAMON.
 named Thomas, and had been forced many Hegyra 207.
 years before to quit Constantinople on ac- Ch. ar. 822.
 count of some crime. He made his escape
 to Bagdat, where he found means to inli-
 nuate himself into the favour of the Caliph,
 on account of his bravery and great zeal for
 mussulmanism: he served near twenty years
 in the Caliph's army, and had always great-
 ly distinguished himself, but especially against
 his own countrymen, on whom he conti-
 nually strove to glut his revenge.

The peace which then subsisted between
 Mamon and the eastern emperors being an
 obstacle to his design, Thomas was so impor-
 tunate with the Caliph, that at last he pre-
 vailed on him to break with the Grecians.
 He remonstrated that there could not be a
 more favourable opportunity for seizing the
 capital of their empire; that the intestine
 wars which then prevailed in that state,
 would make it impossible for them to defend
 the city, and that if they would trust him
 with the command of the expedition, he
 would engage to set the Caliph on the con-
 stantinopolitan throne.

The then reigning emperor was called Michael as-
 Michael; he had been raised to that dignity cends the
 by a most amazing revolution. That prince throne of Con-
 having been condemned to die, in the year stantinople.
 820, by Leo the Armenian, then emperor
 of Greece, was to have been executed on
 Christmas-day at night, but it happening

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Hegyra 207.

Ch. ær. 822.

that Leo was assassinated the same night, Michael was released from his imprisonment, and proclaimed emperor in his stead. The beginning of his reign was undisturbed; he had taken care to put an end to their divisions, and had also ceased the prosecutions which his predecessors had carried on against such as persisted in the worship of images; but, ere long, he persecuted them in his turn. He soon openly declared against all sorts of religion, and became remarkable for the most scandalous vices. As he could neither write nor read, he could not bear such as knew more than himself; and above all, he shewed an inveterate hatred against men of letters.

He is rendered
odious to his
subjects.

So many concurrent defects rendered him odious to his subjects: cabals were formed, against which, however, he bore up by his intrepidity, and the assistance of some courtiers, whose interest it was to support him. Thomas having received advice of the situation of affairs in that country, warmly solicited Mamon to embrace so fair an opportunity of uniting the Grecian empire with the dominions of the Mussulmen.

For a long time the Caliph refused to comply with the proposal. He was content with the tribute, which the Greeks paid with the utmost punctuality, and was unwilling to quit his application to the sciences, which was his favourite employment, rather than go upon an enterprize which he did not think would prove so easy as was pretended.

But Thomas still continued his application MAMON.
to the Caliph, and endeavoured to obviate all Hegyra 207.
difficulties, by proposing to carry on the war Ch. ær. 822.
in his own name, in case Mamon would The Caliph
furnish him with troops, and all other things grants troops
necessary for so important an enterprize: at to Thomas to
last the Caliph consented, and ordered a con- make war on
siderable body of forces to be levied, at the the Greeks.
head of which Thomas began his march, to
make an irruption into the eastern empire.

Some authors assert, that the animosity of Motives that
this general against the Greeks, was not induced Tho-
solely owing to the punishment they had con- mas to make
demned him to suffer for the crime which war on the
had forced him to fly his country; but that Greeks.
having formerly been a great friend to Leo,
who after he attained the empire was assassi-
nated by Michael's adherents, he was re-
solved to avenge the death of his friend, and
if possible dethrone the assassin.

Others assert, that Thomas, who was a
man of very mean extraction, but at the
same time a person of great courage and un-
derstanding, and of still greater craft and
subtilty, had created a belief that he was
Constantine, son of the empress Irene, who
was supposed to have been assassinated by
that princess; by means of which pretence
Thomas raised a considerable party: and
that he obtained auxiliary troops of Mamon,
in consideration of an agreement by which
the pretended Constantine promised to grant
to the Caliph some very considerable advan-

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Hegyra 207.

Ch. ær. 822.

tages, so soon as he should ascend the throne of his ancestors.

However that was, Thomas had a formidable army under his command, consisting of Persians, Medes, Arabians, Iberians, Chaldeans, and other people, who were incited by the hopes of booty to engage in the expedition. Even a large number of Christians marched under his standard, with a view to free the empire of the East from a sovereign, who, for his great vices, was despised by all mankind.

He ravages
Asia Minor.

So soon as this numerous army had entered Asia Minor, Thomas soon made himself master of almost all the places of strength in that extensive province. Some of them kept the faith they had sworn to the emperor, and resolved to defend themselves; but they were soon forced to surrender, and were totally destroyed; and in this manner he treated such of the towns as stood an attack in form.

He defeats
the Greeks,
and is pro-
claimed em-
peror.

Michael, astonished at so sudden an irruption, made preparations to face the enemy: he sent out a body of troops to stop their progress, but his precaution was ineffectual; his army was almost totally routed; and Thomas taking advantage of the victory, solemnly assumed the title of emperor, and was crowned by a prelate named Jub, who was intitled bishop of Antioch.

Thomas lays
siege to Con-
stantinople.

This bold enemy, elated with his great success, marched directly to Constantinople.

He

He was joined on the march by fresh detachments of Christians, and other subjects of the emperor Michael, by whose assistance he laid siege to that capital: whilst he attacked it by land, his fleet also approached the place, and broke the chain which defended the entrance of the harbour.

MAMON.

Hegyra 207.
Ch. ær. 822.

They immediately pushed on the siege with great vigour, but they were soon obliged to abate of the warmth of their attacks for want of warlike machines. Thomas took on the spot a resolution of turning the siege into a blockade, and employing part of his troops in the conquest of Thrace; but at the time they were preparing to march on that expedition, a furious tempest ensued, which wrecked part of the ships of the Saracen fleet, which lay in the port of Constantinople. Thomas vainly strove to repair the loss. The rainy season, which was setting in, compelled him at last to raise the siege, in order to save his troops and the remains of his fleet. He accordingly took up his winter-quarters in Asia Minor, where he remained till the weather was fit for him to retake the field.

His fleet is dispersed by a storm, and he is obliged to retire.

The Greeks taking advantage of his absence, worked without intermission in repairing the fortifications of Constantinople; and they, at the same time, added new works, which rendered the attack of the place much more difficult: they also fitted out their fleet, and made an ample provi-

Preparations of the Greeks to sustain a fresh siege.

MAMON. sion of fire-ships and fire-works, in order
 Hegyra 207. to deal with the Saracens at their return.
 Ch. ær. 822.

Thomas re-
 news the siege.

Thomas soon appeared again before that city : he depended the more on success in this new attempt, as he carried on a secret correspondence with the place, by means of a person of distinction, who, on account of some disgust he had taken to the emperor Michael, had deserted with a body of troops he commanded, and had entered into the service of the Saracens. But when Thomas appeared again at the gates of Constantinople, this deserter reflecting, that as the Greeks had now so strongly fortified themselves, they might probably gain the advantage, and that it would be attended with the greatest danger if he should fall into their hands, he resolved to make his peace with them ; and accordingly, by means of the acquaintance he had in the town, he informed the besiegers, that if they would make a sally on the Saracens, he would at the same time attack the latter in the rear, by which means they might easily get the better of them.

Thomas received intelligence early enough to prevent this piece of treachery. He placed a body of troops strong enough to fall on the deserters, on the first movement they should make to attack the Saracens, whilst they were engaged with the Grecian troops appointed to make the sally ; the command of which detachment he reserved to himself. The design succeeded to his wish ; the
 Grecians

Grecians sallied out and attacked the Sa-
 racens ; the deserters having prepared to
 attack them in the rear, Thomas fell fu-
 riously on them with his body of reserve,
 and cut them in pieces ; and having taken
 their commander prisoner, he condemned
 him to death on the spot.

The Saracens having thus punished the
 traitors, resumed the attacks with great vi-
 gour ; but as the besieged also made a very
 gallant defence, much time passed, and
 they made no very considerable progress.
 Thomas, who was impatient to find the
 siege so prolonged, sent orders for the Sa-
 racen fleet to sail immediately from Barut,
 where it lay, and to appear before the walls
 of Constantinople.

The fleet soon arrived there, and Thomas
 was preparing to batter the place on all sides
 to great advantage, when by an incident all
 his designs were rendered abortive. The
 Greeks quietly suffered the mussulman fleet
 to approach their ramparts, and made not
 the least attempt upon them during the
 whole day ; but so soon as night came on,
 the emperor sent out his fire-ships, and the
 fire-works being played off, they set part of
 the enemy's ships in a flame, obliged the
 remainder to retire, and in short, threw the
 whole fleet into such confusion, that they
 were unable to defend themselves : the
 Greeks gained a great booty on this occa-
 sion by the capture of many ships. The
 land-forces that were on board the fleet, for

Part of the
 faracenick
 fleet is burned.

MAMON.

Hegyra 207.
Ch. ær. 822.

the most part either perished in the flames or were drowned; the few that escaped reached the shore with great difficulty, and joined the army in their camp.

The king of
Bulgaria de-
feats the Sa-
racens.

This event was soon followed by another, which totally ruined the army of Thomas. The king of Bulgaria arrived at the head of his forces, and offered his assistance to the Grecian emperor. The saracenick general resolving to be before-hand with the Bulgarian, marched out to meet him, in order to give him battle before his troops had time to recover from their fatigue: but this step was likewise fatal to the Saracens; they were broken and totally routed by the Bulgarians, who took from them a considerable booty, and made a prodigious number of prisoners. The king of the Bulgarians might have made greater advantages of his victory, if he had thought fit; but in the main, he was not sorry to see the Greeks insensibly weakened by the losses they sustained from the Saracens: he therefore resolved to retire, reckoning that he should one day be able to take advantage of the bad posture of the affairs of both parties.

The empe-
ror receives
fresh rein-
forcements.

In the mean time the Grecian emperor received fresh reinforcements; and as they entered Constantinople by the Black Sea, Thomas could by no means keep them out of the city, nor could he get any certain intelligence of their numbers. The general, since his last defeat, had been employed in assembling his shattered troops; and the ap-
prehensions

prehenfions of a new misfortune having rendered him more circumfpect, both in refpect to his encampments, and his attacks, he had taken poffeffion of a poft, from which he propofed to gain the double advantage of avoiding the being forced by the Greeks, and of being at the fame time in a condition of annoying them confiderably; befides, in that pofition he could eafily receive the fuccours which he daily expected.

But the Grecian emperor did not give them time to arrive. So foon as he received the fuccours by the Black Sea, he made a fally, and his troops faced the Saracens with fo much intrepidity, that terror feized the whole camp: the ftrength of their poft was of little avail for their defence: the Greeks, forced their camp, and made a terrible flaughter of them; however, Thomas made his efcape, and fled to Adrianople, with the few troops who had faved themfelves from the hands of the victors.

This retreat put an end to the exploits of Thomas. The muffulman troops, who, till that event, had ferved him with great zeal and affection, infenfibly deferted him; and he had foon none left to defend him but the inhabitants of the place to which he fled for refuge: being driven to fo great extremity, he ufed his utmoft endeavours to gain credit and authority in the city; but fo foon as the imperial troops came in fight, the inhabitants of Adrianople would not expofe themfelves

MAMON.

Hegyra 207.

Ch. ær. 822.

He forms the
Saracen camp.

MAMON. themselves to be plundered, or run the
 Hegyra 207. risque of the emperor's resentment; they
 Ch. ær. 822. therefore resolved to wait on that prince, and
 to deliver up his enemy into his hands.

Hegyra 208. They put their design into execution, and
 Ch. ær. 823. thereby obtained the emperor's pardon, for
 having afforded a retreat to his foe. The
 Thomas is de- unhappy Thomas was cruelly punished for
 livered up to the Grecian taking up arms against his country; they
 emperor, who puts him to cut off his hands and feet, and in that
 death. condition mounted him on an ass, led
 him through all the streets of Adrianople,
 and then carried him to the Grecian camp,
 where he soon died.

The death of that general put an end to
 the enterprize, at which Mamon conceived
 no uneasiness, save on account of the troops
 and fleet he had furnished out for the expe-
 dition. He had never entertained any great
 opinion of the design, and would not come
 to a resolution, till he knew with what suc-
 cess it was attended: he therefore was not
 greatly concerned when he heard the news
 of that disaster; and finding, though the
 Grecian emperor had good reason to com-
 plain, that he still continued to pay the tri-
 bute imposed on the empress Irene, and con-
 firmed by her successors, he behaved to that
 prince as if he had not meant to break the
 truce, of which the tribute was the confi-
 deration.

The emperor Michael, who dreaded Ma-
 mon, did not lay that event to his charge;
 and

and he was the better pleased he had avoided a quarrel with him on that occasion, as he had soon other enemies on his hands, whom he could by no means have opposed, if he had been obliged at the same time to make head against the mussulman forces.

These new enemies were also Mahometans, and were called Saracens, because, as I have already said, the Christians gave that name to all such as bore arms against them under mussulman colours, whether they were natives of Arabia, Syria, or other countries.

These were Saracens of Africa, who had fixed themselves at Morocco and Algiers, where they chose a Caliph, to whom they gave the title of Emir al Muslimin, and who was totally independent on the Caliph of Bagdat. They landed on the Coasts of Greece, and plundered and ruined all that country. They entered the isle of Crete, now called Candia, made themselves masters of it, and kept their ground against all the forces sent by the emperor to retake it. In a short time that prince also lost Sicily, where one of his officers called in the Saracens to assist him against the emperor, who intended to seize him on account of some crime he had committed; and they gained the whole island, except Syracuse and Tormina.

Whilst

MAMON.

Hegyra 209.
Ch. ær. 824.The Caliph
causes many
works of the
antients to be
translated into
Arabick.

Whilst the Greeks were employed in defending themselves against these barbarians, Mamon passed his days in great tranquillity at Bagdat, where he strove more than ever to make the arts and sciences flourish. It has appeared in the lives of some of his predecessors, that those princes had already caused many old Greek authors to be translated into the Arabian tongue; Mamon followed their plan, and as he was more learned than they, so also he shewed a better judgment in his choice of authors. At that time appeared in Arabick the works of Aristotle, Theophrastus, Euclid, Hippocrates, Galen, Dioscorides, and, in general, all the good performances, both ancient and modern, which they could procure from different countries, where the sciences and learned men had been formerly held in esteem.

Hegyra 210,
211.
Ch. ær. 825,
826.

The example of the sovereign, the great regard he shewed to men of letters, and the benefits he bestowed on them, were prevalent motives to men of parts and ingenuity to distinguish themselves. The Arabians, who were possessed of a penetrating genius, and a quick conception, soon made themselves masters of the most abstruse sciences, and published a great number of performances of different kinds, in which they paid homage to the prince, by dedicating them to him as their protector.

By this new emulation, the reign of Mamon was rendered more illustrious than it would

would have been by a series of victories. MAMON.
 The love of literature seemed to have totally Hegyra 210,
 destroyed the roughness and barbarity for 211,
 which the Arabians had been formerly con- Ch. ær. 825,
 demned by polite nations; for, notwith- 826.
 standing the great pains taken by some of Parallel drawn
 the Caliphs to reform the manners and im- between the
 prove the genius of that people, certain Caliphate of
 marks of ferocity, from which even their Mamon and
 sovereigns were not exempt, had from time those of his
 to time shewn themselves: subjects had predecessors.
 been disgraced without cause, cruel punish-
 ments inflicted, and even heads cut off upon
 the slightest pretences; whereas, under Ma-
 mon all things were wisely conducted with
 an even hand: there was no effusion of
 blood; and if his reign was the reign of the
 arts and sciences, it might also well be called
 the reign of mildness and moderation.

He gave a very pregnant proof of the Generous
 goodness of his disposition, upon an occasion Conduct of
 where he inclined to mercy, when his cour- Mamon to
 tiers, for the most part, had advised him to Ibrahim.
 use severity. It was in relation to Ibrahim,
 who was raised to the Caliphate in the city
 of Bagdat, whilst Mamon was yet in Cho-
 rasan.

Ibrahim having resigned the crown, upon
 his nephew's approach to Bagdat at the head
 of his army, had effectually concealed him-
 self in that very city, and by disguising him-
 self in female attire, he remained there in-
 cognito many years. The Caliph knew he
 was

MAMON. was in the capital, and commanded a strict
 Hegyra 210, search to be made after him ; but as it was
 211.
 Ch. ær. 825, suspected Mamon's design was rather to ter-
 826. rify, than to punish him, they were not
 very diligent in their enquiry : however, af-
 ter some years, Ibrahim, who possibly had
 abated of his former circumspection, was
 discovered, notwithstanding his disguise.
 They apprehended him, and immediately
 informed the Caliph that he was in custody.

Mamon called a council on the same day,
 and asked their opinions touching what ought
 to be done on that occasion ; when they una-
 nimously declared Ibrahim worthy of death,
 and alledged, that fatal inconveniences might
 ensue, if mercy should in such a case be ex-
 tended.

The Caliph then sent for Ibrahim, who
 was brought before the council in his dis-
 guise ; so soon as he entered the room he
 fell prostrate to pay his obeisance to that
 prince, and directing his discourse to him,
 he said, “ The peace of God be with
 you, O commander of the faithful ; if you
 avenge yourself, you only use your prero-
 gative ; but if you forgive, you shew your
 virtue : if my crime is great, your clemen-
 cy is still greater.”

“ My council,” said the Caliph, “ have
 unanimously condemned you to die.” “ Your
 counsellors,” said Ibrahim, interrupting Ma-
 mon, “ have judged according to custom,
 and the fixed rules of political government ; if
 you

You pardon me you will not indeed act according to precedent, but you will not have your equal amongst sovereigns.”

MAMON.

Hegyra 210,

211.

Ch. ær. 825,

826.

Mamon, who was naturally inclined to mercy, and who besides thought Ibrahim was sufficiently punished, by having passed so many years in continual disquietude, for a crime which, all things considered, he had involuntarily committed, tenderly embraced that prince, saying to him with great emotion; “Uncle, be comforted, I will not do you the least displeasure:” and, in fact, he caused his pardon to be forthwith made out, and bestowed on him a rank and fortune suitable to his birth. This day, so happy to Ibrahim, was a day of festival at the court of Bagdat. The courtiers came in crowds to compliment and congratulate the Caliph on an event which so greatly added to his reputation for generosity and clemency. The prince, sensible of the effect which was produced on their minds by the pardon he had just granted, cried out from the fullness of his heart: “Oh! did men but know what pleasure I take in pardoning, such as have offended me, would come and acknowledge their offences.”

The return of Ibrahim to the court, greatly contributed to augment its pleasures; that prince was very learned, and his conversation was equally instructive and amusing: he had as great a love for letters as Mamon, and had made the fine arts his particular

MAMON. particular study. Above all he excelled in
 Hegyra 210, musick, of which he was a perfect master;
 211. infomuch, that when Mamon had closely
 Ch. ær. 825, applied himself to graver studies, he used to
 826. entertain him with his fine voice, and by several instruments on which he performed with equal skill and taste.

Ibrahim was moreover of a very chearful disposition, his conversation was lively, and he was ready at repartee; all which was of great use to unbend the Caliph's mind, which for some time had been engaged in the study of a science very hard to be attained.

Mamon applies himself to the study of the mathematicks.

He was resolved to make himself master of the mathematicks; but this was by so much the more difficult, as there was not a person to be found in Bagdat capable of assisting and forwarding him in the study of that science; however at last they met with a Greek slave, who was introduced to him as a person capable of enabling him to make a considerable progress in a short time.

A slave assists him in the study of that science.

Mamon, pleased at this lucky discovery, immediately gave the slave his liberty: he next bestowed on him the means of living comfortably, and of appearing at court. The Caliph was so well pleased with the methods the Grecian took to forward him in the mathematicks, that he desired to know who he was, and how, at his early time of life, he could have gained so great an insight into so extensive a science.

The

The Greek answered, that the knowledge MAMON.
 he had acquired was solely owing to the Hegyra 210,
 great care and pains, which one of the most 211.
 learned men in the eastern empire had been Ch. ær. 825,
 pleased to bestow on him: this man was named 826.
 Leo, he was a great philosopher and most He invites to
 able mathematician: being bishop of Thes- his court a
 salonica, and having refused to comply with learned man
 the opinion of the emperor, who had de- called Leo.
 clared against the worship of images, he was
 deprived of his bishoprick, and had retired
 to Constantinople, where he lived on what
 he could gain by teaching, having no other
 fortune but his talents. The Grecian spoke
 so highly in praise of that learned man, and
 described his real situation in such moving
 terms, that Mamon resolved to invite him
 to his court.

He accordingly wrote a very obliging letter
 to the bishop, in which, after having declared
 the high opinion he entertained of his merit
 and knowledge, he invited him to come to
 Bagdat, where he might meet with a condi-
 tion and fortune worthy his abilities. Ma-
 mon dispatched the letter by a man, who was
 a native of Greece, and was well acquainted
 with Leo, and he instructed the messenger
 to enforce his request, and to set in the most
 favourable light the advantages he might
 hope to gain at the Caliph's court.

The news of this message soon reached The emperor
 the court of Constantinople: the emperor*, opposes his
 departure.

* Michael the flammerer.

MAMON. either through jealousy, or for some other
 Hegyra 210, cause, refused to comply with the Caliph's
 211. request; infomuch, that when they applied
 Ch. ær. 825, to him to give leave to Leo to quit his do-
 826. minions, he would not grant it; and he even
 began to shew a great regard to that learned
 man, in some measure to make him amends
 for the advantages he lost through his means.

Hegyra 212, Mamon being thus unable to gain a point
 213. he had so much at heart, resolved to com-
 Ch. ær. 827, mence a literary correspondence with Leo,
 828. thereby to receive the benefit of his instruc-
 Esteem of the tions. This correspondence continued a long
 Caliph for that learned man. time, and always with the same satisfaction
 to the Caliph. Marmol, from whom I bor-
 row this fact, says, that Mamon having one
 day received a letter from Leo, in which
 he had solved a problem in Euclid (of
 which the Caliph had asked the solution)
 with the utmost clearness, he cried out in a
 transport, "Happy are they who live at Con-
 stantinople, and can enjoy the conversation
 of so excellent a master!"

Hegyra 214. His affection for that great man increased
 Ch. ær. 829. on the receipt of each letter he wrote to the
 Caliph; and so strong was Mamon's desire
 of being more intimately acquainted with
 Leo, that he was many times tempted to un-
 dertake a voyage to Constantinople in per-
 son; but reflecting, that his rank was an in-
 surmountable obstacle to such a design, he
 wrote to the emperor, in hopes of prevail-
 ing on that prince to send Leo to him; and
 that

that his request might meet with a more favourable reception, he accompanied it with magnificent presents. His letter was couched in these terms :

MAMON.

Hegyra 214.

Ch. ær. 829.

Mamon, grand emir and prince of the Arabians, to Michael, emperor of the Christians.

“ It was my intention to have paid you a friendly visit ; but as the grandeur of my station, and the nature of my people, will not permit me to undertake it, I desire you will send to me the most learned philosopher Leo, that I may profit by his instructions in the study of the sciences, of which I am a passionate admirer. Let not the difference in our religions prevent you, for I ask him as a friend : on that consideration I will maintain a perpetual peace with you, and will send you one thousand byzants of gold to indemnify you for the expence of the last campaign*.”

The emperor paid not the least regard either to the intreaties or offers of the Caliph, but returned an evasive answer ; at which Mamon was so piqued, that he took up arms and entered the provinces of the empire : but this expedition was soon ended ; he only

Expedition
against the
Greeks.

* Mamon probably meant the war which Thomas had commenced against Michael, and in which the Saracens served as auxiliary troops.

MAMON.

Hegyra 214.

Ch. ær. 829.

feized some of the strongest frontier places, and went to pass the winter at Damascus.

The presence of the sovereign at that city was become absolutely necessary for the putting an end to some disturbances which had arisen there. Mamon soon quelled the disorder, and passed the remainder of the unpleasant season in enjoying that tranquillity, which, by his wise regulations, was again established in the capital of his empire.

Hegyra 215.

Ch. ær. 830.

The next year he renewed the war against the Greeks. Michael the stammerer no longer possessed the throne; he died about that time at Constantinople, and Theophilus his son, whom he had associated to the empire in his life-time, succeeded to the crown. Advice was brought to Damascus, that either by that prince's orders or otherwise, they had put to the sword near sixteen hundred men in the frontier towns belonging to the mussulman empire. Mamon, enraged at their cruelty, again crossed over into Greece with his troops, and added new conquests to those he had made the preceding year: he afterwards formed two large detachments, the first commanded by his brother Motassem, and the latter by one of his general officers, who marched into different parts, and committed great ravages in the Grecian territories.

After these expeditions, which were performed with the greatest rapidity, the two commanders rejoined the main army with their

their detachments, and the Caliph, contented with his present advantages, was unwilling to push them any farther. He returned to Damascus, where he ordained a general fast, preparatory to a festival of his church, which he celebrated with great solemnity.

MAMON.

Hegyra 215.

Ch. ær. 830.

In a short time he went into Egypt on account of a letter, by which he was informed that an immense treasure was hid under two columns in a place which was described to him: this information was sent in consequence of what had been alledged by some persons of veracity, who declared, that, to their knowledge, Merwan the second of that name, and the last Caliph of the house of Ommyiah, had caused some very ponderous chests to be buried in that spot; and that shortly after his death, they had again put others under-ground, which they could not do so secretly as to prevent its being discovered; but that no search had been since made in that place, and therefore it was to be presumed things remained in the same condition.

Hegyra 216.

Ch. ær. 831.

They discover
a treasure hid
by Merwan
the second.

Mamon therefore went into Egypt, that he might be present at the opening of the treasure in question: he caused them to dig in the place where the two columns stood; and having worked a short time they found several coffers, which contained a great quantity of jewels of all kinds, rich furniture, and a large quantity of money: there was one amongst the rest filled with linen, which was

MAMON.

Hegyra 216.

Ch. ær. 831.

extremely fine; Mamon being desirous to know what it was, they took it out piece by piece, and they found it consisted of shirts, the cuffs of which were extremely foul.

The Caliph surpris'd at such a sight, asked if no person could be found to tell him the reason of it; and soon, an old officer, whose father had served under Merwan, appeared, and gave him the information he desired. He told Mamon, that Merwan, who was extremely voracious, was very fond of lamb, and above all loved the kidney, and therefore a whole roasted lamb was, by his order, often brought to his table; that so soon as it was set down, the Caliph used to wrap up his hand in the sleeve of his shirt, and plunging his arm into the body of the lamb, to tear out the kidney, which he eat immediately; that he then put on another shirt, and that the foul linen was laid by to be no more used, which had occasioned the heap they found, and which actually amounted to ten thousand shirts.

Mamon, who was before ignorant of this anecdote, was amazed at such a piece of singularity: he applied all the money, jewels and furniture, to his own use. As to the linen, he made a present of it to the officer who had acquainted him with Merwan's manner of living.

Hegyra 217.

Ch. ær. 832.

Sequel of the
war with the
Greeks.

The Caliph soon returned to Damascus, whence he shortly departed to march out against the Greeks, who had raised an army with

with a view to recover the places they had MAMON.
 lost the preceding year. Mamon arrived very Hegyra 217.
 opportunely to render their design abortive, Ch. ær. 832.
 and took such prudent measures, that he prevented the emperor from advancing so far as he proposed; as for the rest, no considerable advantages were gained on either side.

At the time Mamon was opposing the Division of the
 enemies of the state, the sciences which he Mussulmen
 had put on so good a footing in his capital, into several
 continued to make a very great progress; but religious sects.
 in time divisions unfortunately arose amongst the learned. These disputes were commonly attributed to Aristotle's philosophy, of which the Arabians were very fond; they studied with equal eagerness and delight the empty subtilties of the logick and metaphysics of that philosopher. Many uncommon questions now arose, which being debated with great warmth by men of different opinions, soon gave rise to as many different sects.

Without entering into a minute account of these questions, it may suffice to mention such of them as then made the most noise: for example, one question was, Whether such men as professed Mussulmanism, and committed heinous sins, should be deemed of the faithful or not? Some declared for the affirmative, others for the negative, and their disputes ran so high, that they were many times on the point of coming to blows.

Another dispute, equally important, arose touching the attributes of God: some of

MAMON.

Hegyra 217.

Ch. ær. 832.

them maintained, that the attributes of the divinity were distinct from his essence; others asserted, that by separating them from his essence, he would be deprived of his ornaments: many other questions also were debated, as, Whether God knew through his knowledge or through his essence? Whether his word was eternal and uncreated? If what he did for human creatures was always the most expedient for them? Whether sin destroyed faith? or, If that virtue could subsist without good works? in a word, by the help of subtilizing, many different opinions arose, which produced various sects, whose doctrine was, by so much the more difficult to be understood, as the doctors for the most part did not comprehend it themselves.

The Caliph
declares for
the Motazeli.

But the sect which was then held in the greatest repute, was that of the Motazeli*. It was of more than one hundred years standing amongst the Mussulmen; however, the

* The doctrine of the Motazeli consisted in the following points, (according to Mr. Basnage, a French writer in his *Histoire des Juifs*, Tom. V.) First, They held that the attributes of God ought not to be separated from his essence. Secondly, They believed, as did also all the followers of Ali, that the Koran was created, and consequently was not eternal. They even asserted, that the Arabians were able to have wrote as excellent a book as the Koran, if they had thought fit to undertake it. Thirdly, They taught that faith is not destroyed; but that, however, the name of Faithful cannot be given to such as commit heinous offences. Fourthly, They maintained, that God has only a general influence over the actions of man; that he absolutely leaves him to his own free will; and from thence he merits either rewards or punishments.

increase

increase of it had been greatly prevented by MAMON.
 the frequent wars, both foreign and intestine, Hegyra 217.
 in which the Mussulmen had been engaged. Ch. ar. 832.
 The tranquillity which the state had enjoyed
 from the time Mamon began to reign, af-
 forded to those sectaries a fair opportunity of
 propagating their doctrine; and when they
 were in a condition of proping it up by the
 empty subtilties which they drew from the
 logick and metaphysicks of Aristotle, they
 soon gained an immense number of follow-
 ers, at the head of whom appeared the Ca-
 liph, and, after his example, most of the
 chief personages amongst the Arabians.

Such of the Mussulmen as pretended to
 great devotion, were highly offended at the
 Caliph's behaviour; they openly blamed him
 for having been so ready to bring into his do-
 minions learned men and the sciences, which
 they looked upon to be the chief authors of
 all the disputes that had arisen in matters of
 religion: this induced Takiddin, an Arabian
 writer, to say, that God would infallibly pu-
 nish the Caliph Mamon, for having inter-
 rupted the devotion of the Mussulmen, by
 the introduction of philosophical studies †.

The murmurs which arose amongst the
 Mussulmen, on account of these discussions

That step
causes mur-
muring.

The Caliph
establishe a
kind of inqui-
sition.

† Fieri non posse quin Deus certas de Almamone poenas
 fumeret, quod, scientiis philosophicis introductis, Moham-
 medanorum pietatem interpellaverit.

Pakokius not. in specim. Hist. Arabum.

MAMON.

Hegyra 217.

Ch. ær. 832.

of points of doctrine, greatly perplexed the Caliph ; he was touched at the accusation of having altered the doctrine of the prophet ; and in the heighth of his concern, he resolved to take speedy and effectual measures to put an end to so disadvantageous a report. Some authors affirm, that he erected a kind of inquisition to oblige all his subjects, of what sect soever they were, to profess Mussulmanism ; but he soon perceived, that more harm than good would result from such an establishment, and that besides it would infallibly drive away the literati, who would not submit to be constrained in their manner of thinking.

Hegyra 218.

Ch. ær. 833.

If such an inquisition was ever established, its power was of no long duration ; for we find that the Christians, who must have been the chief objects of the inquiry of such a tribunal, as they were the most inveterate enemies to Mussulmanism, remained, however, undisturbed at Bagdat and Damascus, and other great cities, where they had churches. We learn from history, that a prelate, named Monk, who was patriarch of the Jacobites at Alexandria, dying in the reign of Mamon, another person was chosen to succeed him, who was by no means interrupted in the steps he took for the promotion of the christian religion : he caused several churches to be rebuilt, and some monasteries to be repaired, which were soon filled with proper inhabitants,

inhabitants, without the least opposition from MAMON.
the Caliph.

Hegyra 218.

Ch. ær. 833.

That prince, probably reflecting on the fatal consequences which persecution always produces, resolved to wink at the quarrels amongst the different sects, and prudently to avoid using rigorous means, which only serve to inflame matters, and increase the number of the disobedient ; besides, by tolerating different sects, he prevented the state from perceiving their divisions ; and by his moderate conduct he succeeded to his wish. In respect to himself, he was far from remaining indifferent as to the tenets of all the parties ; and as he had already shewn a strong inclination to the doctrine of the Motazeli, so he professed it till his death.

He tolerates
the different
sects.

The rigorous Mussulmen could never forgive Mamon, for shewing so much moderation at a time they wished to see fire and sword employed, to eradicate a doctrine which offended their tender consciences ; but they were not so imprudent as to attempt to stir up the people against that prince. He was so beloved by his subjects, and so well deserved their affections, that the mischief they had aimed at him would have fallen on their own heads.

The disputes about doctrine were suspended by some new motions which were made by the Greeks. The emperor Theophilus had raised another army, and advanced to the frontiers of the mussulman dominions, in hopes

MAMON.

Hegyra 218.

Ch. ær. 833.

The Greeks
make an ir-
ruption, and
are beaten and
pursued.

hopes of succeeding in the design which had failed him the preceding year.

So soon as the Caliph received intelligence of that prince's march, he caused a body of troops to file off towards the frontiers, and shortly went to take the command of his army. This campaign was also fatal to the Grecians; the emperor Theophilus was repulsed, and forced to return to his own territories: Mamon warmly pursued him, and took several considerable places from that emperor, carrying away with him an immense booty, and a great number of prisoners.

After this expedition, he caused his troops to march into quarters of refreshment in Cilicia; and so soon as they were well recovered from their fatigue, he sent them to the capital; but the fatal moment was at hand which was to put an end to his life; for that prince, who was far from being advanced in years, and who seemed to enjoy perfect health, was struck almost suddenly by the hand of death, in the very place he chose to refresh and divert himself after his fatigues.

Mamon's
death.

Historians relate, that Mamon riding one day with Motassem his brother, and some of his favourites, in the pleasant fields of Cilicia, came to the banks of a river, whose cool and limpid waters invited him to wash his feet; he therefore alighted, with his attendants, by the river-side, and sitting on its banks he put his feet into the water; having
continued

continued there some time, he had an inclination to eat, and seemed to be particularly desirous of getting some dates of Azad, a place remarkable for that kind of fruit. His officers were at a great loss to know how to gratify his inclinations, when, by accident, an opportunity offered: one of the Caliph's train espying at a distance a great number of camels, loaded with merchandize, went up to the master of them, who happened to have several baskets full of the finest dates; he bought the whole quantity and brought them to the Caliph, who bestowed a part of them on all his attendants.

MAMON.

Hegyra 218.

Ch. ær. 833.

As he was extremely fond of dates, he eat of them to excess; and having nothing to drink but the water of the river on the banks of which he then stood, he drank of it with the greater pleasure as the water was cool, and the weather hot.

But he soon paid very dear for his gratification. The dates, which are naturally very hard of digestion, gave him a violent pain in the stomach; a fever ensued, and increased to such a degree, that his life was despaired of. As he was thoroughly sensible of his danger, he immediately took measures to secure the peace of his dominions by appointing a successor, or rather by confirming the choice which Haroun-al-Rashid his father had solemnly made. He therefore sent circular letters to all the provinces of the empire, requiring them after his death to acknowledge

MAMON.

Hegyra 218.

Ch. ær. 833.

ledge his brother Motasssem, as lawful sovereign of the whole mussulman state. The respect he bore to the memory of his father, induced him to make that nomination instead of appointing his own son Abbas, to whom many of his courtiers advised him to leave the crown.

It is impossible to express the grief the people felt; on hearing that the prince visibly declined, and was on the point of giving up the ghost. This piece of news threw all the provinces wherein it was spread into the utmost consternation; but nothing ever equalled the concern of such as were about his person: he gave them, even to his last moments, plain proofs of the same goodness and affection, which he had so manifestly shewn through the whole course of his life; and after having struggled a long time with his distemper, he died uttering these words: "O thou that dost not die, Supreme being, have mercy on a poor dying man."

His character.

Such was the end of a prince, who, from the concurrent testimony of historians, was the most accomplished of all sovereigns, and equally commendable for the sweetness of his disposition, and the prudence of his conduct. He shone equally bright in the cabinet, and in the field; but his glory was raised to the highest pitch, by the ceaseless regard he shewed to letters and learned men, whom he ever honoured with his protection. Some of his predecessors had, indeed,

indeed, as we have already observed, at- MAMON.
tempted to introduce the sciences amongst Hegyra 218.
the Arabians, and had in some measure suc- Ch. ar. 833.
ceeded; but in the days of Mamon they ap-
peared with full lustre, and took such deep
root, as to remain with dignity during the
reign of his successors.

The success of this important undertaking was owing to the example which Mamon himself set to his subjects. When that prince had invited men of learning into his dominions, he not only exhorted his subjects to go and receive instructions from their lectures, but he was also one of the first to frequent the schools which he himself had founded; and he gave in the sequel undoubted proofs of the progress he had made in the most abstruse sciences, by drawing up with his own hand astronomical tables, which are highly esteemed for the exactness of their calculations †.

It is not said why the body of that prince was not carried to Bagdat to be interred there. It is wonderful that the capital, which through the pains he had taken, was become the center of the sciences, politeness, and true taste, did not earnestly sue to have his remains deposited within its walls; but it does not appear that the least attempt of that kind was made, and Mamon's corpse was buried at Tarsus, one of the principal cities of Cilicia, a province where that prince halted to refresh his troops. It

† Vide Choix des Etudes, par l'Abbé Fleuri.

MOTASSEM.

Hegyra 218.

Ch. ær. 833.

It appears from El Makin, that the burial of Mamon at Tarsus was looked on by some as a mark of reprobation. This author cites to that purpose, a passage of an Arabian poet, couched in these terms: "Behold the stars are weary of Mamon and his reprobate reign; they have left his body at Tarsus, as they left his father's at Thous." These verses were probably composed by some of those very devout Mussulmen, who were offended at the toleration the Caliph had granted to the various sects which arose in his dominions, or were disgusted at his adhering to the doctrine of the Motazeli till the time of his death.

This prince, says the same El Makin, was of a middle stature, his features handsome, and his complexion very fair, but his face was a little covered with pimples. He lived forty-eight years, of which he reigned twenty. He left a son named Abbas, of whom mention will be made in the following reign.

M O T A S S E M.

The TWENTY-SEVENTH CALIPH.

Motasssem is
proclaimed
Caliph.

MOTASSEM, surnamed Billah, that is, Sovereign by the grace of God, was the son of Haroun-al-Rashid, and brother of Amin and Mamon, the two last Caliphs.

That

That prince was solemnly proclaimed at MOTASSEM.
 Tarsus in Cilicia, without the least opposi- Hegyra 218.
 tion, except from a few soldiers who tumultu- Ch. ær. 833.
 ously demanded, that Abbas, the son of
 Mamon, might be Caliph; but this noise
 was soon silenced by the acclamations of the
 troops in general, who acknowledged Mo-
 tasssem to be their sovereign. Abbas was
 not displeased to be proposed to succeed his
 father; but as he was of a mild and peace-
 able disposition, and as he was apprehensive
 they made use of his name, with no other
 view than to raise a sedition in the state, he
 took such measures as he thought the most
 effectual to prevent any such accident.

Shortly after the Caliph's proclamation, Abbas, the
 Abbas assembled his friends, and the chief son of Ma-
 of such as he knew were devoted to him: mon, swears
 he intreated them to accompany him to the allegiance to
 palace, without informing them of his de- him.
 sign. The greatest part of them imagining
 that Abbas, urged on by ambitious views,
 would endeavour to strike some bold stroke,
 in the performance whereof he might stand
 in need of their countenance and assistance,
 came at the appointed time, being severally
 well armed, and ready for all events; but they
 were undeceived, when having followed Ab-
 bas to the palace, they saw him fall at the Ca-
 liph his uncle's feet, and take the oath of alle-
 giance to him: the young prince then raising
 himself from his humble posture, turned to
 his attendants, and said to them with a loud
 voice,

MOTASSEM. voice, “ You see that I have resigned up to
 Hegyra 218. Motaſſem all my right and title to the throne;
 Ch. ær. 833. follow my example, and let it be our future
 duty to obey him.” Abbas gained great
 honour by ſo noble and diſinterreſted a ſtep;
 and it would have been well for him, if in
 the ſequel he had acted with the ſame mo-
 deration.

Reasons which
 induce the Cal-
 iph to quit
 Bagdat.

Motaſſem having tarried as long a time at
 Tarſus as was neceſſary for his inauguration,
 departed at the head of his troops, and came
 to Bagdat, where he was likewise proclaim-
 ed Caliph: he made no long ſtay in that
 city. From the moment his brother died,
 ſome of the courtiers had endeavoured to
 prejudice him againſt the inhabitants of Bag-
 dat, by repreſenting them as a ſet of factious
 turbulent men, fond of novelty, and always
 ready to countenance plots and ſedition:
 they mentioned the depoſition of Amin, and
 the proclaiming of Ibrahim; probably their
 diſputes on matters of religion were not for-
 got; in ſhort, they ſo often repeated and
 enforced the character they gave of the men
 of Bagdat, that Motaſſem reſolved to quit
 the city, and fix elſewhere the ſeat of his
 empire.

Hegyra 219.
 Ch. ær. 834.

Khondemir gives another reaſon for the
 diſlike which the Caliph took to Bagdat.
 This author relates, that Motaſſem took a
 fancy to young Turkiſh ſlaves, and bought
 a great number of them, of which he formed
 a fine body of troops, who, in a ſhort time,
 filled

filled the whole capital. Those young soldiers, finding they were countenanced by the Caliph, became insolent, and committed great disorders in Bagdat. The inhabitants complained of their ill behaviour: fair promises were made to them, but not the least step was taken to put a stop to the arrogance of the young Turks: at last, after repeated and ineffectual complaints, the inhabitants threatened to right themselves by force; and it actually appeared they were preparing to take up arms to punish the insolent soldiery.

MOTASSIM.
Hegyra 219.
Ch. ær. 834.

The Caliph, who was very fond of his new troops, resolved to secure them from the attempts of the inhabitants of Bagdat, by abandoning that city, and founding a new one, which he proposed to make the place of his usual residence. For this purpose he chose Cathoul, lying about ten or twelve leagues from Bagdat; there he laid the foundations of his new city, the plan of which he drew with his own hand, and ordered it to be called Samarath. In the center of the ground designed for that city, a very extensive spot of land was set apart, whereon he proposed to erect his palace; and as it was his design that it should overlook the whole town, he contrived a very uncommon method to raise the ground he proposed to build on, to a due height.

He builds Samarath.

It was a custom amongst the Arabians to hang bags at the heads of their horses, and

MOTASSEM.

Hegyra 219.

Ch. ær. 834.

other beasts of burthen, wherein they put a due provision of oats, when they set out on a journey. The Caliph ordered them to fill the bags belonging to all his horses with earth, and bring them to the middle of Samarrath; this operation having been often performed, a sufficient quantity of earth was soon procured to raise the ground to the proposed height; for it must be observed, that Motasssem, who was a great admirer of horses, had continually an infinite number of them: some historians make them amount even to an hundred and thirty thousand.

However, when the ground was properly raised, he caused a magnificent building to be erected on the eminence, which had in the lower floor a saloon open on all sides, supported by marble columns of admirable workmanship: he also ordered fine and spacious stables to be erected, which for beauty of architecture, soon made as fine an appearance as the Caliph's palace.

Hegyra 220.

Ch. ær. 835.

Revolt in Persia
excited by Babek.

Whilst Motasssem was employed in executing the plan of his new city, he was informed that a great revolt had happened in Persia, in which the cities of Ispahan and Hamadan, the two principal places in the province, were concerned. The storm began to extend itself even into Persian Irak, and the chief commander of the rebels was then quartered with his troops in Aderbijan, of which province he was a native.

This

This rebel was called Babek, and he assumed the surname of Horremi, or Horremdin, that is, according to d'Herbelot, "The Author, or, the Professor of a religion of joy and pleasure:" and indeed, he preached up only sensuality: in other respects, he did not follow any of the sects that had already appeared amongst the Mussulmen: he began to propagate his doctrine in the reign of the preceding Caliph. That prince even sent a body of troops against him, to bring him under subjection; but Babek, who knew how to gain advantages, knew also how to maintain them; he defeated Mamon's troops, and slew the Caliph's general with his own hand.

This victory rendered him more enterprising: he extended his forces into the provinces of Persia, added great numbers to his party, and at last fixed his quarters in Aderbijan, where he had full time to fortify himself; for Mamon having been obliged to march out against the Greeks, and happening to die soon after that expedition, they gave over the thoughts of putting in execution the design he had formed of attacking that rebel on his return.

Motasssem himself for a while concealed his resentment against Babek; but when he received advice, that the number of the rebels was daily augmented, he thought it high time to make preparations to subdue them; he therefore set on foot a consider-

MOTASSEM. able army, of which he gave the command
 Hegyra 220. to Haidar-ebn-Kaous, surnamed Affchin.
 Ch. ær. 835. This general was by birth a Turk ; he was brought in the condition of a slave to the Caliph's court ; and having distinguished himself for his superior talents and merit, the prince readily appointed him general in chief on the expedition against the rebels.

The general began his march for Aderbijan, and entered the province without the least opposition from Babek, who kept close within his fortifications. Affchin therefore easily took possession of some castles, at which the enemy were not uneasy, because they had taken the precaution entirely to dismantle them ; but Motassem's general foreseeing the great use he might make of those places, by putting them into a posture of defence, immediately set about repairing the fortifications : he was not hasty to attack Babek, concluding he should be able to fall on him with greater prospect of success, when he should have in his rear so many strong places to cover his march back, or which might at least serve him as a place of retreat, in case the fortune of war should be adverse to him ; besides, in putting strong garrisons into those fortresses, the enemy would be greatly streightened and kept in awe.

Hegyra 221.
 Ch. ær. 836.
 Babek is defeated.

Babek, who trusted entirely to his forces, suffered Affchin to carry on the works without giving him the least interruption ; so that

a long time passed before any enterprize was undertaken on either side; but so soon as the fortifications were completed, Affchin made preparations to march up to the enemy: he therefore quitted the hills, and encamped in a spacious plain near a town called Ashak.

MOTASSEM.
Hegyra 221.
Ch. ær. 836.

The rebels, who were not in the least alarmed at this step, also put themselves in motion; and Babek boldly advanced, and even offered battle. Affchin, who was very desirous of coming to blows, accepted the challenge: the signal was soon given on both sides, and a bloody action ensued, which was maintained by both parties with uncommon intrepidity.

Babek, who had been successful in every encounter he engaged in from the beginning of his revolt, was surprised to find with what great boldness Motassem's troops repelled all his attacks; but he was much more amazed, when the brave Affchin, animating his soldiers both by his words and his example, marched up at the head of a body of choice troops, fell on him with great fury, and broke all that opposed him. This violent attack caused the rebels to give ground; Babek vainly endeavoured to support them, for they soon left their ranks and were totally routed: the chief finding all was lost, quitted the field of battle, and rode full speed to Mogan, where he halted to collect the broken remains of his army.

MOTASSEM.

Hegyra 221.
Ch. ær. 836.Affchin pur-
sues him.

This blow did not totally discourage him; for having been joined by a great number of his troops, who, notwithstanding their defeat, seemed resolutely bent to continue the rebellion at all hazards, he retreated with them to the Gordian mountains, where he thought he should be able to recover his losses, and to remain with security, by means of the forts he had erected to guard the passes of those mountains: but the active and vigilant Affchin did not give him time; he pursued him closely, and so harraressed him, that, spight of all Babek's care, he had like to have fallen into his hands.

This pursuit was attended with great difficulties; especially when Affchin came to the entrance of the Gordian mountains, all things conspired to stop up the passages: the garrisons of the forts cut off his provisions; they laid ambuscades, by means of which they killed a great number of men, and often beat up his quarters: however, that intrepid general surmounted all those difficulties, by his experience, his courage, and his patience; by degrees he made himself master of several of the forts, and so streightened Babek, that he forced him to quit the field.

He besieges
him in Caba-
deg.

The rebel had now nothing left but to go and shut himself up in the castle of Caba-deg, which was very strong, and provided with all necessaries to make a long defence. Affchin was pleased with the news; he then thought himself sure of his prey, and march-

ing forthwith to Cabadeg, he invested the fortrefs. He soon began his approaches, and Babek made use of all possible means to retard them : the siege was carried on in form, and the castle was bravely defended ; but Affchin daily gaining some advantage, at last made a general assault, and carried the place.

MOTASSEM.
Hegyra 221.
Ch. ær. 836.

His chief object was the taking of Babek ; all his views were turned towards that rebel. When he entered Cabadeg, he commanded that he should be fought after and brought before him ; but to his great disappointment he found, that he had made his escape on the eve of the last attack, with one of his brothers named Abdallah, and had left all at the mercy of the conqueror.

The general was highly grieved at Babek's escape. He sent out messengers into all parts to enquire after him, and at last, by dint of enquiry, he found out where he was : that rebel had retired to the frontiers of Armenia ; he proposed to go farther to avoid a pursuit, but the governor of one of the frontier places, having offered him an asylum, Babek thought he might safely accept it, as the place belonged to the Grecian emperor ; and he therefore had no room to fear that Affchin would attempt to take him thence by force : however, his retreat to that place proved his destruction. It is not said, whether the governor invited him thither with a view to betray him, or if he carried matters to

MOTASSEM. to such extremities, only on account of Babek's insolent behaviour to him ; but however it was, the following is an account of what passed on that occasion :

Babek accepts
of an asylum
from Sahal.

Sahal (for so the governor was called) having been informed that Babek had taken shelter in his neighbourhood, went to him and civilly offered him an asylum in the city under his command. The rebel having joyfully accepted the offer, Sahal lodged him in the best apartment of the castle, and paid him all the honours due to a sovereign ; Babek received them as if he had been really a monarch ; and when word was brought that dinner was on the table, he shewed great surprize to see the governor sit down with him : “ What !” said he, with a disdainful look, “ dare you to place yourself at my table without invitation ?” Though Sahal was piqued at this reproof, he concealed his resentment ; and assuming a respectful air, he arose and said to Babek, “ In truth, O great king, I was to blame, for who am I, that I should be worthy to sit at table with your majesty ?” He then went from the table, and privately ordered one of his servants to bring fetters forthwith ; his commands having been speedily obeyed, Sahal approached Babek, and, in a jeering strain, said to him, “ Be pleased, great king, to put out your legs a little, that my servant may fix these fetters on them.” Babek vainly attempted

attempted to resist ; Sahal was obeyed, and MOTASSEM. the rebel thrown into prison.

The governor forthwith sent an express Hegyra 222. to Affchin to inform him of the event ; he Ch. ær. 837. also offered to give up Babek into his hands : He is delivered up to Affchin. the general, highly pleased with the news, accepted the governor's offer, and without delay sent a detachment of four thousand men under the command of a trusty officer, who received the prisoner from Sahal, and then conducted him to the Caliph.

It was matter of great satisfaction to that His punishment. prince, to see in his power the man who had raised such great combustions in his dominions ; and he resolved to inflict so severe a punishment on the rebel, as should serve for a warning to all such as should be thereafter inclined to oppose the legal authority. He was first exposed to the view of the people, being carried through several places mounted on an elephant, his legs and arms were then cut off, and finally, he was hanged on a gibbet. His brother Abdallah having been soon apprehended, they treated him nearly in the same manner, that they might have no more to fear from a family which had raised such great disorders.

Scarce was this rebellion crushed, when Hegyra 223. the Caliph was forced to prepare another Ch. ær. 838. army to face the Greeks, who again made Inroad of the Greeks upon the Caliph's territories. an inroad upon the mussulman territories. The emperor Theophilus knowing that the Caliph was employed in subduing Babek and his

MOTASSEM. his adherents, seized that opportunity to commit ravages on the frontiers of Motassem's dominions, and had put all to fire and sword in the places which he got into his possession.

The Greeks
are defeated.

Motassem departed with all speed at the head of his army, and marched against the Greeks, who retired on the news of his approach, carrying with them an immense booty which they had gained in the cities they plundered. The Caliph warmly pursued the Grecians, and came up with them near Mopsueste in Cilicia, where a bloody action ensued, in which the Greeks lost near thirty thousand men. This defeat put an end to the campaign ; the routed troops of Theophilus found means to save themselves, and Motassem, contented with his victory, led back his army to the capital.

Hegyra 224.
Ch. ær. 839.

Conspiracy to
place Abbas
on the throne
in Motassem's
stead.

That prince having gained so signal an advantage over his enemy, was in hopes of tasting the sweets of repose, or at least, that he should have no other work upon his hands than to complete his new city ; but he was scarce returned to Samarath, when, to his great grief, he heard that a conspiracy was formed against him, in which his most intimate friends were engaged. He found that their design was to take away his life, in order to place on the throne Abbas his nephew, the same who had given so remarkable a proof of submission to him at the time of his accession to the Caliphate.

Historians

Historians do not say that Abbas was concerned in this plot; though it cannot, I think, be reasonably supposed that the authors of it would have presumed to contrive this tragedy, without the strongest assurances of his acting a principal part in it.

MOTASSEM.
Hegyra 224.
Ch. ær. 839.

The Caliph would not first believe what he was told of this conspiracy: he could not suspect the fidelity of Abbas, or the integrity of the brave Affchin, to whom he had the highest obligations; however, that general was the chief of the conspirators, and his colleague was another famous captain named Asbah, and they were both the Caliph's chief favourites.

The Caliph behaved with all the prudence requisite in so nice an affair. He was unwilling to use rigorous measures with men of so well established a reputation, without due proof of their intended crime; he therefore caused all their actions to be carefully enquired into, and soon unravelled the whole intrigue.

When he had no longer room to doubt of the designed treachery of such as had been accused of having a hand in this conspiracy, he issued orders, in consequence of which they were all apprehended at the same time. They soon confessed the treason, and punishment speedily followed: Abbas was confined in a close prison, where they gave him meat, but he was denied the least drop of drink; the unhappy prince languished for a long time in that manner, and at last sunk under that

The conspirators are punished.

MOTASSEM. that new kind of punishment. As to Aff-
 Hegyra 224. chin, and his second, they were put to death.
 Ch. ær. 839. immediately after their conviction : the body
 of the former was hanged on the same gib-
 bet whereon the rebel Babek still remained.

In a short time it was discovered, that Aff-
 chin had never been a true Mussulman; and
 that, although he had openly professed the
 Mahometan religion, he was, in reality, an
 Heathen. They found in his house several
 idols, and a number of writings in support
 of their worship, and censuring the doctrine
 of the prophet. The Caliph commanded
 the books and idols to be brought forth, and
 burned in the great square, together with
 the body of Affchin.

Hegyra 225.
 Ch. ær. 840.

The Greeks
 commit new
 ravages.

This affair ended, another arose which
 obliged the Caliph to assemble an army with
 the utmost speed, to march once more against
 the Greeks. The emperor Theophilus, in
 hopes of wiping off the shame of his last
 defeat, appeared again in the mussulman ter-
 ritories at the head of a strong army, and
 committed greater devastations than he had
 done in any former expedition. The Gre-
 cians treated the Mussulmen with the utmost
 cruelty: they took away their wives and
 children, cut off the noses and ears of such
 as were able to bear arms, and committed
 unheard of barbarities on the old and help-
 less.

Motasssem trembled at the account that
 was brought him of what passed on the fron-
 tiers :

tiers : however, he resolved to take speedy vengeance for so inhuman a conduct ; and though he delayed his departure for a short time, it was only that he might be better prepared to prevent the emperor from committing any such insults for the future.

MOTASSEM.

Hegyra 225.

Ch. ær. 840.

El Makin relates, that the first knowledge the Caliph had of the irruption of the Greeks was from a dream. He thought he saw an Arabian woman of distinction seized by the Grecians; that she implored his assistance, and cried out with a loud voice, “ Motassem ! come quickly, and help me ! ” Terrified at the dream, he told it in the morning to his courtiers ; and the same day a courier arrived with advice of the inroad made by Theophilus on his frontiers.

The Caliph set out so soon as the troops were ready : he advanced by long marches till he approached the provinces of the Grecian emperor ; and having given his army some time to recover their fatigue, he went at their head to lay siege to Zabatra. The strong conceit he entertained, that the woman he saw in his dream was a prisoner in that city, induced him to undertake the siege of this place preferably to any other. The courage of the troops corresponding with the ardour of the prince, the works were carried on with amazing expedition ; in short, after several attacks, in which the Greeks defended themselves with great bravery, the place was carried by storm.

The Caliph
takes Zabatra
by assault.

On

MOTASSEM.

Hegyra 225.

Ch. ær. 840.

On this occasion a plain proof was given of the strict discipline which the Caliph had introduced amongst his troops. Though Zabatra was taken by assault, the soldiers only took possession of proper posts to secure it, and did not commit the least disorder; even though it was well known the Caliph designed to put all to fire and sword: but that prince, whose chief care was to find out the mussulman woman he had seen in his dream, had issued orders, that so soon as the place was taken, they should remain under arms, without committing the least violence against any of the inhabitants, until he had discovered what he sought for.

The woman was found in prison; that is to say, several mussulmen women who were confined there having been brought before the Caliph, he pitched upon one of them whom he declared to be the person; and she acknowledged, that when she was seized by the enemy she had implored his assistance with loud cries. The Caliph caused her to be sent to a place of safety, with her companions, and then left the place to the mercy of the soldiers.

Hegyra 226.

Ch. ær. 841.

Amorium is
reduced to
ashes.

The city having been soon destroyed, the Caliph marched to Amorium, a considerable town of Asia Minor, where he received several large detachments, who were ordered to join him at that place. For many days it was battered with incredible fury; the besieged made an obstinate resistance, but the

town

town was taken by storm; and all the inhabitants put to the sword. The Caliph caused the place to be set on fire in several parts; and, though it was one of the fairest in the East, it was soon reduced to a heap of ashes and ruins.

MOTASSEM.

Hegyra 226.

Ch. ær. 841.

Motasssem vented his fury chiefly on Amorium, because it was the birth-place of the emperor Theophilus. It seems as if its destruction had been the Caliph's chief aim in that campaign, for there all his forces joined; besides, he had caused the word Amorium to be engraved on the bucklers of all his soldiers, to manifest the resolution he had taken of sacrificing that place to his resentment against Theophilus.

That prince was so affected with grief at the loss, that he died in a short time, and left the empire to his son Michael, a young prince of small hopes, and who was afterwards known only by the shameful name which he deserved on account of his excesses: they called him Michael the Drunkard.

After the sacking of Amorium, Motasssem continued to bestow the same treatment on the Greeks as they had given to the Saracens; he laid waste Phrygia, and retook all the places on his frontier which the Christians had deprived him of; he then marched into Armenia, where he beat the Greeks in several encounters, and killed them more than thirty thousand men.

MOTASSEM.

Hegyra 226.

Ch. ær. 841.

Motassém is
disordered in
his mind, on
the death of
Salmanaraih.

After this expedition, Motassém returned to Samarath, there to enjoy the fruits of his victories; but his tranquillity was of very short duration, on account of the grief he felt for the loss of Salmanaraih his physician. That prince, who was a valetudinarian, and probably much subject to the vapours, depended greatly on Salmanaraih, who had made himself so well acquainted with the Caliph's constitution, that by the help of such a prudent regimen, as his art and experience suggested to him, he had found means constantly to keep the Caliph in tolerable good health.

This physician being seized with a distemper at the Caliph's return, the apprehensions of losing a man he so highly valued, made that prince fall sick also; and his malady being increased by his vapours, it was conjectured that if Salmanaraih should happen to die, Motassém would not long survive him: the physician actually died, and the affliction the Caliph felt at his loss, was so great as to disorder his senses. The obstinacy with which he refused to take any nourishment during some days, augmented his indisposition; and they gave him over when they saw a coffin brought into his apartment, round which he ordered a number of lighted tapers to be placed, and prayers to be read according to the usage among the Christians.

Hegyra 227.

Ch. ær. 842.

Honain, an Arabian author, who declares he was a witness to the fact, says however,
that

that the prince, in some measure, recovered MOTASSEM.
 his senses. They even entertained hopes Hegyra 227.
 that in time his health might be perfectly re- Ch. ær. 842.
 stored: but the physician that succeeded Sal- Motasssem's
 manaraih, disdaining to follow the method of death.
 his predecessor, fell on a very different prac-
 tice; and the Caliph, with whom his medi-
 cines at first agreed pretty well, on a sudden
 became dangerously ill, and, spight of all as-
 sistance, died at Samarath, in the 227th year
 of the Hegyra, and about the 842d year of
 the Christian Æra.

Though this prince is described to be of so His amazing
 tender a constitution, yet he was prodigiously strength.
 strong. El Makin says, he could lift from
 the ground fifteen or sixteen hundred weight,
 and carry it several paces: his valour equalled
 his strength; of which he gave manifest proofs
 in the war he carried on against the Greeks.

He was, like his predecessor, a strict fol- His prejudice
 lower of the doctrine of the Motazeli, with in favour of
 this difference however, that Mamon tole- the Motazeli.
 rated all other sects; but Motasssem was so
 strongly prejudiced in favour of their tenets,
 that he persecuted several men of note for
 differing with him in opinion: amongst the
 rest it is related, that a Mussulman, highly
 esteemed for his merit and learning, having
 taken the liberty to assert, in Motasssem's pre-
 sence, that the Koran was uncreated, the
 Caliph, who was of a contrary opinion,
 caused the doctor to be so cruelly whipped
 that he fainted away.

MOTASSEM.

Hegyra 227.

Ch. ær. 842.

The prejudice this prince had entertained in favour of the party he so strongly espoused, was far from being the effect of mature deliberation upon such sort of matters. Historians agree he was very ignorant. El Makin says expressly, that he could scarce write his name : whereas Mamon, who was very learned, behaved with the utmost mildness and moderation to such as differed with him on disputable points ; for he was wise enough to discover, that for the most part it was not worth while, for such sort of matters to trouble men, who by their great merit and abilities, were able to do him signal services in affairs of state.

Act of humanity done by Motassem.

But in other affairs, where religion was not in question, Motassem always gave proofs of the same humanity and beneficence for which the Abassian princes have for the most part been so highly commended : as an example whereof, I shall cite a passage preserved by Abu'l Pharagius : Motassem hunting one day lost his company ; he perceived an old peasant, whose ass, very heavily laden, had fallen into a slough, and the old man was at a great loss how to get the beast out again. The Caliph, moved to compassion, alighted from his horse, and was about to assist the peasant : though the countryman did not know Motassem, yet he judged from the richness of his dress, that he must be a person of high distinction ; he therefore desired the Caliph not to attempt to do him a
piece

piece of service, in the performance of which MOTASSEM.
 he would inevitably spoil his cloaths : but Hegyra 227.
 Motasssem, highly pleased with an opportu- Ch. ær. 842.
 nity of assisting the distressed, bid him not
 mind his dress ; and as he was very strong,
 he, in a trice took off the load which kept
 down the poor ass in the mire : he also drew
 the animal out, helped the owner to reload
 it, and then mounted on horseback.

The peasant, who was greatly affected at
 the prince's goodness, cried out with tears in
 his eyes, " Young man, I heartily pray that
 God may prosper all your undertakings."
 He was much more amazed, when, on the
 arrival of Motasssem's train, he found it was
 to the Caliph himself he was indebted for
 so kind and seasonable a piece of service : he
 therefore fell at the Caliph's feet, to pay his
 obeisance to him ; and the prince added to
 the favour he had already bestowed on him
 a present of a considerable sum of money.
 So admirable an instance of humanity and
 generosity more loudly and effectually pro-
 claims Motasssem's praise, than all that can
 be said by writers in his commendation.

El Makin, who always describes the per-
 son of the prince whose life he writes, says,
 That the Caliph was of a very fair com-
 plexion, that his features were handsome,
 his hair light-coloured, his beard long, and
 that he was of a middling stature.

They gave him the firname of Mottham-
 men, because the number eight was to be

WATHEK.

Hegyra 227.

Ch. ær. 842.

found in almost every circumstance of his life. He was born in the eighth month of the year, and was the eighth prince of his race, and the eighth Abassian Caliph: he ascended the throne in the eight hundred and eighteenth year of the Hegyra; eight times he commanded his troops in person; he reigned eight years eight months and eight days; he died in the forty-eighth year of his age; he had eight sons and eight daughters; and he left in the treasury eight millions of gold, and eighty millions of silver.

Of all the Caliph's eight sons only two succeeded him in the throne; to wit, Wathek-Billah, and Motawakel.

W A T H E K - B I L L A H.

The TWENTY-EIGHTH CALIPH.

THIS prince was called Haroun, after the name of his grandfather; but in the sequel they gave him the name of Wathek, and to this he added Billah, which signifies (as we have already said) Sovereign or Prince by the grace of God, or, He who is preserved by the grace of God. It will appear that a long series of Caliphs assumed that surname.

Wathek-Billah was proclaimed Caliph at Samarath the very day his father Motassem died. The order for his proclamation was sent

sent to Bagdat, where the Caliphate was unanimously confirmed to him. This prince imitated the example of Mamon his uncle, in the protection he granted to learned men, and the favours he bestowed on such of them as distinguished themselves in his dominions.

WATHEK.
Hegyra 227.
Ch. ær. 842.

He also adhered to the sect of the Motazeli: but, instead of following the mild and prudent conduct of Mamon, he cruelly persecuted all such as refused to subscribe to the opinions he had embraced.

Wathek declares for the Motazeli.

It has already appeared, that the main question then in debate was, Whether the Koran was created or uncreated; and indeed it was the modish dispute. As a good Mussulman a man must have believed, or at least declared, that the Koran was uncreated; this was the opinion of the most devout Mussulmen: but the Motazeli maintained the contrary; and the Caliph warmly espousing their side of the question, the courtiers, for the most part, and such as had expectations of court-favours, became Motazeli: this was an easy change, as their maxim was to chime in with the opinion of the sovereign.

The contrary party was, however, the most numerous, and they all joined in their common support: encouraged by the indulgence which Mamon had shewn to them, they openly inveighed against the Motazeli. Motassem's firmness had a little disordered them; however, they were not quite disconcerted, as they depended upon regain-

WATHEK.

Hegyra 227.

Ch. ær. 842.

ing credit under a new government. But Wathek from the very beginning of his reign convinced them that no doctrine contrary to that he followed, could be embraced with safety.

There were however some amongst those bold men, who being, either thoroughly persuaded of the truth of the doctrine they professed, or perhaps, having no other means to raise their characters but by opposing the court, took a pride in speaking freely, and spreading maxims conformable to their manner of thinking.

Though Wathek was no stranger to these transactions, yet he was unwilling to treat the cabal with rigour. His forbearance gave new courage to the refractory; a regular party was formed, and they appointed chiefs, whom they honoured with the title of Hafed; that is to say, Conservators of the traditions of the prophet, and consequently professed enemies to the Motazeli.

Hegyra 228.

Ch. ær. 843.

They form a league to depose him.

Several of those chiefs, who had connections at court, brought over to their party some of the principal courtiers; and at last a league was formed, the chief object of which was of no less consequence than to dethrone Wathek, and to raise in his stead a celebrated doctor of their party, called Ahmed al Korai.

Luckily for the Caliph the conspirators had permitted some young men to engage in the design, who, through vanity, to let the world know they were trusted in affairs of such

great importance, indiscreetly discovered WATHEK.
 part of the secret. The governor of Bagdat Hegyra 228.
 having been immediately informed of it, Ch. ær. 843.
 dispatched an express without delay to Samarath, and advised the Caliph to be on his guard; and in the interim he took proper measures to secure the chief of the conspirators, and particularly Ahmed, whom he caused to be apprehended, and sent to Wathek, loaded with chains.

When Ahmed was brought before Wa- The ring-
 thek, the Caliph did not mention a word leader is
 of the conspiracy; he only examined him killed.
 touching the point of doctrine, which was the chief cause of the contest. Ahmed set out with a prolix introductory preface, before he declared his opinion, as to the matter in question; but the Caliph, who did not admire long speeches, stopped him in the beginning of his career, with this question, "What he thought of the Koran?" that is to say, whether the book was created or uncreated. Ahmed being then driven to a necessity of speaking plainly, he declared he could not believe that the Koran was created. The Caliph hearing this answer, made no reply, but drew forth his cymetar, and cut off the doctor's head. Thus ended the conference, and the conspiracy was instantly dissipated.

So peremptory a conduct startled all such as differed in opinion with the Caliph; and no person being willing to share the same
 fate

WATHEK. fate with Ahmed, all disputes on points of doctrine were for a while suspended.

Hegyra 229.
Ch. ær. 844.

Irruption of
the Saracens
into Sicily.

Arabian authors do not say that Wathek was personally present at any military expedition; however, in his reign the Mussulmen made an irruption into Sicily, seized the city of Messina, which they plundered, and carried off an infinite number of the inhabitants into slavery. But these hostilities were committed by the Saracens of Africa, who were under a sovereign, independent of the Caliph of Bagdat or Samarath.

Hegyra 230.
Ch. ær. 845.

Exchange of
christian and
mahometan
prisoners.

As to Wathek, he did not make war on the Grecian emperor; on the contrary, they entered into an accommodation, by which it was stipulated, that an exchange should be made of the prisoners on both sides taken in the last war.

This exchange was made near the river Lamefus, a league from the high road to the city of Tarsus in Cilicia: the emperor and the Caliph sent each their prisoners, under the care of a general officer. So soon as the Caliph's commissary sent out a christian slave, the emperor's officer returned a mahometan prisoner; and as they at the same time passed the bridge, which was over the above-named river, each of them repeated a word, to shew the religion he was of. The christian parole was Kyrie Eleison; the mahometan word Allah: but that alone was not sufficient for the Mahometan to be received with the rest of his countrymen.

The

The Caliph who was still wedded to the WATHEK. opinions of the Motazeli, had given orders Hegyra 230. that each Mahometan should be required to Ch. ær. 845. give a particular account of his faith, before he was exchanged: thus, besides saying the word Allah, the commissary obliged them to declare their belief, whether the Koran was created or not? His orders were to reject all such as should say the book was uncreated, and to admit only those who, like the Caliph and the other Motazeli, should say it was created. The number of slaves released on this occasion amounted to about four thousand men, and about six hundred women and children.

From this exchange till the time of the Hegyra 231. Caliph's death, which happened two years Ch. ær. 845. afterwards, nothing memorable occurred in the mussulman empire. Wathek was seized with a dropsy, of which he languished a long time, and finally died.

It is asserted, that the distemper arose from the excesses which the Caliph had been guilty of from his youth. Addicted to women, wine, and good cheer, he always gave way to his irregular desires; and when his appetite was blunted by a too frequent enjoyment, he used provocatives to sharpen it.

This bad custom, which could not avoid In what manner the Caliph was cured of a dropsy. being attended with fatal consequences, effectually ruined the prince's constitution, and at last he became dropfical; he was then obliged to have recourse to physick, and made enquiries

WATHEK.

Hegyra 231.

Ch. ær. 845.

enquiries in all parts for a person capable of undertaking his cure. A famous physician of Nisabour undertook to restore him to his health ; though by a very uncommon method. Having ineffectually employed all the secrets of his art, he attempted to cure him by perspiration ; and as it was necessary it should be very copious to remove so great a disorder, he ordered the prince to be put into a lime-kiln : without doubt he previously calculated the exact degree of heat necessary for his design. The Caliph finding himself eased, the remedy was daily repeated for some time ; and at last the dropsy disappeared.

The physician, highly pleased at the cure, took the liberty of informing Wathek, that though he was now recovered from his disorder, yet he must observe a strict regimen, or he would infallibly soon relapse. The Caliph appeared very conformable, and for a while punctually complied with the prescription.

But the renewal of his health having also given a new life to his former passions, he forgot the prescribed regimen, and fell into the same excesses as had already brought him so near his end. And he was the more encouraged to gratify his darling appetites, as he relied on the predictions of an astrologer, who having calculated his nativity, according to art, assured him he had fifty years more to live.

A promise so pleasing to a sensual man, WATHEK.
soon obliterated all thoughts of a regimen; Hegyra 232.
and the Caliph took the same liberties as he Ch. ær. 846.
had before done: but he soon felt the ill ef- Death of Wa-
fects of his excesses, and was obliged to apply thek.
again to the same remedy which had already
cured him. He was at first much eased by
the operation; but one day, after having been
in a profuse sweat, he was seized with a
fever, the very instant he was put into his
litter, in order to be brought back to the
palace. They hastened their pace, that they
might the sooner carry him to his chamber;
but before they could reach it he was taken
speechless and senseless; and died, after
having reigned about five years.

El Makin differs a little in the account
he gives of this prince's end. Wathek, says
he, finding death was approaching, repeated
this verse of an arabian poet: "Death is
common to all men: no man is exempt from
it, neither the king, nor the lowest of his
subjects." He then was, by his own order,
taken out of bed, and laid on the bare floor,
without so much as a mattress under him,
and there lifting up his hands and eyes to
heaven, he cried out: "Great God! whose
reign will endure for ever, thou who hast
subjected kings and peasants to the stroke
of death, have mercy on a poor prince, whose
days are come to an end."

According to the same author, Wathek
soon expired; and the courtiers instantly
went

WATHEK.

Hegyra 232.

Ch. ær. 846.

went to pay their homage to the prince who was likely to succeed him. During this stir, Wathek's body having been left without a person to watch it, a pole-cat, others say a lizard, got under the sheet that covered it, and either scratched out, or gnawed out the eyes. This prince had a fair and lively complexion, his beard was thick, his physiognomy handsome, and his look pleasing. He had a white spot in his right eye, of a square form, which seemed to sparkle with fire when he was in wrath: it is said, that they could not then bear to look on him.

If Wathek had not imprudently given into the excesses which shortened his days, he might have acquired as much glory as the most illustrious of his predecessors; for historians unanimously agree, that he was a perfect master of the art of reigning. He had established such good and wholesome laws in his dominions, that not a beggar was to be seen there: he founded hospitals for the old and infirm; and as to such poor as enjoyed their health and limbs, he obliged them to work and earn their living.

He was, like Mamon, a protector of the arts and sciences, and gave many evident proofs of the progress he had made therein. He had the reputation of being an excellent poet: he was equally skilled in musick, and composed many airs, which were highly esteemed by the most eminent masters.

This prince left a son called Mothadi, who afterwards attained the Caliphate.

MOTA-

MOTAWAKEL-BILLAH. MOTAWAKEL

Hegyra 232.

Ch. ær. 846.

The TWENTY-NINTH CALIPH.

ALthough the chief men of the state had, for the most part, waited on Motawakel, in order to proclaim him Caliph immediately after the death of Wathek his brother, yet many obstacles were to be removed before any thing could be concluded on.

A party arose in behalf of Mothadi the son of Wathek ; and they alledged, that as the young prince was heir to his father's substance, he ought also to be heir to the Caliphate. The opposition made by this party, suspended the proclamation for a time ; and it was to be feared they would have come to blows, if the Turkish militia had not put an end to the difficulty, by openly declaring for Motawakel.

A party is formed in favour of Mothadi.

This militia, which had been for some years introduced amongst the Saracens, were become so powerful, that they made the scale preponderate on the side of the person, whose interest they thought fit to espouse : however, they did not come to extremities on this occasion, the whole being managed by way of treaty.

The Turkish militia cause Motawakel to be recognized.

Wassif, for so the leader of those troops was called, caused an assembly of the chief officers

MOTAWAKEL officers of the state, and nobility to be held; and after having represented to them the reasons why they ought to declare in favour of Motawakel, he observed, in respect to Mothadi, that it had always been looked upon as dishonourable amongst them to place a prince on the throne, who, on account of his youth, was incapable of performing the duty of a sovereign. He particularly urged, how unseemly it would be for a child to read the publick prayers, and perform the other functions of Imam, or chief pontiff of the Mussulmen.

These arguments, urged in a forcible but dispassionate manner, had a great effect on the minds of the electors; and at last they all concurred to give their votes in favour of Motawakel, who was appointed to be Caliph at Samarath, and was afterwards proclaimed at Bagdat, and the other chief cities of the mussulman state.

The new Caliph was a man of parts, and was even endowed with some virtues; but his good qualities were sullied by many shameful vices: he was envious, avaricious, and even cruel to such a degree, as to delight in the invention of punishments to torment the wretched.

Character of
Abu Giaffer
the vizir.

He was encouraged in this cruel disposition by the pernicious maxims of his vizir, who held as a rule, that clemency was no more than meanness, liberality but folly, and pity a ridiculous weakness.

This

This vizir was called Abu Giaffer Mo-
 hammed: he was, says El Makin, a very
 learned man, and well versed in grammar
 and poetry; he both spoke and wrote with
 great elegance, but at the same time he was,
 continues that author, unpolite, proud, self-
 sufficient, cruel, dishonourable, greedy of
 riches and favour, and incapable of doing a
 good office to any person.

MOTAWAKEL
 Hegyra 232.
 Ch. ær. 846.

Such was the man with whom the Caliph
 had contracted a most intimate friendship in
 the life-time of his predecessor. When Mo-
 tawakel ascended the throne, he continued
 him in the office of vizir, which he had
 executed under Wathek. The Caliph had,
 however, reason to be displeased with him,
 for having caused a quarrel between him
 and his brother; but as he served him to
 his wish in his horrid actions and contri-
 vances, he thought fit to continue that offi-
 cer in his post.

Hegyra 233.
 Ch. ær. 847.

As the Caliph was one day talking with
 that monster, touching new kinds of punish-
 ment, he advised the erecting an iron fur-
 nace, to be stuck full of very sharp nails,
 and to inclose therein the wretch he intend-
 ed to destroy; and a fire was to be lighted
 under it, stronger or weaker in proportion
 to the cruelty he would inflict on the victims
 to his fury.

He invents a
 new kind of
 punishment,
 which is inflict-
 ed on himself.

Unfortunately for the vizir he gave the
 Caliph fresh cause of complaint, and fell into
 the utmost disgrace. Motawakel caused him

Hegyra 234.
 Ch. ær. 848.

MOTAWAKEL to be apprehended, and resolved to destroy Hegyra 234. him; but before he put him to death, he was Ch. ær. 848. determined to enjoy the pleasure of tormenting him by slow degrees.

He forthwith caused him to be thrown into prison; and in the room, next the prisoner's chamber, a certain number of men were placed, who were ordered to make a noise day and night, to prevent him from taking any rest: in this situation he passed several days, during which, the persons appointed to torment him were regularly relieved.

The cruel Caliph then ordered them to cease their noise, and the wretched vizir made himself amends for his watching by a sleep of four-and-twenty hours duration; after which Motawakel taking him out of prison, caused him to be put into the dreadful furnace he had himself contrived.

But what added to the displeasure of all men, the Caliph carried his barbarity so far as to be a spectator of the torments inflicted on his vizir. He even insulted the poor wretch at a time when, unable to bear the excruciating pains, he begged the Caliph to have pity on him: "Pity is only a ridiculous weakness," said that prince, alluding to the base maxims the unhappy minister had uttered in the days of favour.

Hegyra 235. So unmerciful a conduct gave a general Ch. ær. 849. disgust, and might perhaps have caused an insurrection against the Caliph; but fortunately

nately for him the vizir was universally de-
 tested, infomuch, that though they abhor-
 red the cruelties inflicted on him, they could
 not help agreeing, that he well deserved the
 punishment he had suffered; and by de-
 grees the whole affair was buried in oblivion.

MOTAWAKEL
 Hegyra 235.
 Ch. ær. 849.

The Caliph took advantage of that juncture
 to secure the crown to three of his children,
 of whom the first was called Montasser, the
 second Motaz, and the third Mowaiad. He
 had also two other sons, to wit, Motamed,
 and Muaffed, whom he absolutely excluded
 the throne: however, it will appear that
 things fell out in this respect very contrary to
 his intentions. So soon as he had made this
 disposition of his dominions, he commanded
 his subjects to take the oath of allegiance to
 his children, to whom he gave the investi-
 ture of the lands he severally assigned them,
 by delivery of a standard. Montasser had
 the provinces of Irak, Hejaz, and Yeman.
 Motaz had Chorasan, and the country of
 Baia, and Mowaiad Syria Damascena.

The Caliph
 causes three
 of his sons to
 be acknow-
 ledged as his
 successors.

The close of that year, and the beginning
 of the next, were employed by the Caliph in
 giving proofs of the hatred he bore to the
 Alians and their friends: he caused an edict
 to be published, by which the pilgrimage to
 the tomb of Ali, the prophet's son-in-law, was
 prohibited on severe penalties; and carrying
 his resentment still further, he sent orders to
 the plain of Kerbela, that they should de-
 molish the tomb of Hosein, Ali's son, who

Hegyra 236.
 Ch. ær. 850.

He prohibits
 the pilgrimage
 to Ali's tomb.

He causes the
 tomb of
 Hosein to be
 demolished.

MOTAWAKEL was buried on that plain, after he was killed in the battle he fought there. The tomb was therefore totally rased; and that not the least vestige of it might remain, they caused a current of water to flow over the very spot on which they had erected a monument in memory of Hosein.

Ali's party, after the usual manner, relate a number of miracles, which they assert were then performed to shame the Caliph for his profaneness. Some say, that when the channel was finished, it would never serve the purpose for which the Caliph designed it; that the waters entered it indeed, and flowed to a certain distance; but when they came to the place where Hosein's tomb was erected, they stopped out of respect, and could not possibly be made to run any further.

Others say, that at the same time Ali appeared in a dream to the Caliph, and after having tartly reproved him for the outrages he committed on his family, gave him seven blows with a whip which he held in his hand: the Caliph terrified at the vision, related it in the morning, in order that some person might give him an explication of it; but his attendants all kept a profound silence. However, he found, that a man belonging to the court had told one of his friends, that the whip with which Ali smote the Caliph, was the sword which Mahomet gave him to perform his grand exploits, and that some misfortune would probably happen to the Caliph,

as a punishment for the insult he had committed on the memory of that illustrious Mussulman; and this kind of prediction seemed in some sort to be verified by what happened in the sequel.

MOTAWAKEL
Hegyra 236.
Ch. ær. 850.

Whilst that prince was thus employed in maltreating the ashes of Ali and Hosein, a sedition arose in Armenia, occasioned by the instructions he gave to Joseph ebn Moham-med, when he appointed him governor of that province, and of Aderbijan. He ordered him on his arrival to seize an officer of distinction, named Bokrat, who was patrician or chief lord of the province. The other patricians, enraged at the treatment bestowed on one of the principal members of their body, combined with Bokrat's family, and formed a league against the new governor. At a fixed day they rose up in arms, and assembling themselves near a castle called Mushi, which they had appointed for their rendezvous; they reviewed their forces, and marched up in battle-array to meet the governor. Joseph having received timely notice of their design, had prepared for his defence: and finding himself strong enough to risque an action, he boldly marched out against the rebels. This encounter proved fatal to Joseph and his troops; the governor was killed on the spot and his army totally routed.

Hegyra 237.
Ch. ær. 851.
Revolt in Armenia.

Motawakel had no sooner received the news of this misfortune, than he caused a fresh body of troops to march, partly consisting

The rebels
are beat by the
Turks.

MOTAWAKEL consisting of his Turkish militia, and commanded by Buga, who was one of the principal officers of that corps. The rebels, elated by their former victory, boldly faced the new troops, and hoped easily to get the better of them; but they learned to their cost what men they had to deal with. The Turks broke them, put them totally to the rout, and pursued them to Teflis, the capital of the province, in which they besieged them.

They are buried in Teflis.

But as the operations of the siege went on slowly, Buga contrived to reduce the place, and even entirely destroy it, if they did not soon capitulate. He caused wooden towers to be brought near the wall, from the top of which he set the place on fire. For this purpose he employed a great number of his men, who had been long expert in darting lighted firebrands: this contrivance succeeded; the houses in Teflis being built only of wood, easily took fire. A wind which arose carried the flames to several parts of the city, and it was finally reduced to ashes. Near fifty thousand men perished in the place, amongst whom were the rebels, with their leader. This was paying very dear for the defeat of a party of malecontents, who could by no means have done so much damage, as resulted from the ruin of that city.

Hegyra 238.
Ch. ær. 852.

The Greeks
plunder
Damietta.

Whilst the Caliph was thus making use of fire and sword in his own dominions, the Greeks were meditating an irruption, which proved successful in all points. Having received

ceived intelligence, by means of their spies, MOTAWAKEL that Damietta were weakly guarded, and that Hegyra 238. there was no regular troops in the garrison, Ch. ær. 852. they privately made preparations for a descent; and at a time convenient for the expedition, a fleet consisting of three hundred sail of ships suddenly appeared before Damietta, when they were not in the least expected.

Terror seized on the inhabitants, who strove to make their escape by means of a little ford, which was in the midst of a most extensive space of still water, between the town and the port; but in the hurry and confusion of their flight they missed the track, and the greatest part of them miserably perished in the attempt.

The Grecians having entered the place without the least opposition, were soon busily employed in plundering and making slaves: having pillaged it during many days, they again went on board their ships, with immense riches. They at first resolved to keep the place, and leave a garrison there; but fearing it would not be possible to put the fortifications in a proper state of defence, before the arrival of the mussulman troops, they determined to plunder the city, and then destroy it, rather than run the risque of sustaining a siege, which must inevitably end in the taking of the place.

As the Caliph was hasty and passionate, he Hegyra 239. must have been greatly moved at such an Ch. ær. 853. outrage; however, it does not appear that he Edicts issued against the Christians and then Jews.

MOTAWAKEL then took any measures to revenge himself on the Greeks. On the contrary, he remained as quiet in his dominions as if no misfortune had happened, and was solely employed in framing new laws and regulations for the government of the state. Such as he published that year were chiefly calculated to mortify and humble the Christians and Jews. He had some years before declared them incapable of holding any post or employment under the government. He then ordered them to wear large girdles made of leather, that they might thereby be known from the Mussulmen: in a word, he that year forbid them to ride on horses, and only suffered them to make use of mules or asses, but on condition they should have no iron stirrups to their saddles.

These mortifying distinctions caused all the Christians and Jews that were in his dominions to become his enemies. This prince was not better beloved by his own subjects; and it may safely be asserted, that he never had a sincere friend at his court. The ferocity of his disposition, and the oddity of his temper, rendered him insupportable to all such as from the nature of their office were obliged to live with him. They run the risque of their lives in parties, which might have been reasonably expected to be only parties of pleasure.

Example of
the Caliph's
ferocity.

An author relates, that often when he was debauching with his courtiers, he would
cause

cause a lion to be turned loose into the room, MOTAWAKEL that he might make himself merry at the Hegyra 239. fright into which he put all his guests. Ch. ær. 853. At other times he used to lay serpents under the table, or break in pieces pots full of scorpions and other venomous creatures; when this strange mad prince used to command, that no person should stir from his place, on pain of death; so that they were forced to run the risque of being stung by those animals. It is true, he instantly prevented any ill consequences from the bite, by applying an excellent antidote, of which he knew the secret, and which never failed of performing a cure, though the poison was ever so strong. Thus he took a pleasure in causing men to be dangerously hurt, that he might have the credit of performing a speedy cure.

This savage prince seemed daily to contrive means to render himself more detested. Hegyra 240. He could not even make a friend of his own Ch. ær. 854. son; and he brought him up in such a manner, as effectually to destroy all those sentiments, which are implanted by nature, or infused by education, in a child towards its parent. He carried the young prince into the company of his debauched courtiers; he made him drink to excess, and then took delight in beating him, in order that he might put him in a rage. As wine and passion caused him to say many gross things, the father was displeased and beat him again; and
we

MOTAWAKEL We shall soon see the fatal consequences of so uncommon an education.

Hegyra 240.
Ch. ær. 854.

Indignation
of the people
against the
Caliph.

So senseless a conduct raised great murmurs amongst all his subjects. They looked on the Caliph as a monster, unfit to live on the face of the earth ; and even such of them, as through the gentleness of their dispositions were most averse to the shedding of blood, did not discountenance the design then in agitation, for assassinating the Caliph. The whole nation therefore earnestly wished his death : some of them would readily have undertaken to strike the blow, in order to gratify the people. Others, who were more moderate, only addressed their prayers to heaven, that it would be pleased soon to free the world from a prince, who by his actions debased both human nature and the throne.

He suspects a
conspiracy.

The many complaints that were so openly made against the Caliph, might at last have ended in a conspiracy, but none was yet formed ; however, a slave belonging to Motawakel, having overheard some officers of distinction speak very disrespectfully of his master, imagined that some plot was contriving against him, and he forthwith ran and advised the Caliph to be on his guard.

Motawakel did not wait till he could make the enquiries necessary on such an occasion ; he resolved to be before-hand with the conspirators : he did not indeed know who they were ;

were ; but being persuaded, that in destroy-
 ing a considerable number of his courtiers,
 he should certainly intimidate the rest of
 them, he imparted his design to some of
 his favourite slaves, who were the usual in-
 struments of his cruelties, and with them he
 concerted the bloody project that was to be
 put in execution.

Having settled his scheme, he next in-
 vited the chief lords and principal officers of
 the state to a festival, which was to conclude,
 according to custom, with a grand entertain-
 ment. The prince's invitation was com-
 plied with, and the festival was solemnized
 with a truly royal pomp and magnificence.
 As to the entertainment, whether the intended
 guests doubted some ill treatment from the
 Caliph, or whether they were unwilling to
 expose themselves to be wounded by the ve-
 nemous creatures which the Caliph caused
 to be laid down in the room, when the li-
 quor began to operate, a great number of
 them declined being present thereat, on va-
 rious pretences.

By this prudent precaution they saved their
 lives ; the business now was not to affright
 the guests with the appearance of some sa-
 vage beast, or venomous creatures : the Ca-
 liph had resolved to sacrifice to his fury all
 such as he had invited to the feast : in fact,
 all that were present were inhumanly butch-
 ered. Motowakel himself began the bloody
 execution : he rose up hastily, in the midst of
 the

MOTAWAKEL the entertainment, and drawing his sword, smote off the heads of such as were next him ; in a moment, the persons he had appointed to second him, unsheathed their cymetars, and massacred the remainder of the guests : some of them, indeed, escaped being slain at first, by hiding themselves in the apartments, but they were soon pursued and put to death without mercy.

The Caliph, transported with brutal rage, went into the most distant parts of the palace in search of those that had made their escape. One of his favourite servants, who had the care of one of the apartments, seeing the prince come with fury in his looks, and a bloody sword in his hand, was filled with terror at his approach. He was upon such terms with his master as to have no reasonable cause to fear on his own account ; but apprehensive that he might be mistaken for another by a mad man, who in his fits did not know even himself, he was greatly alarmed. When the Caliph entered the room, he cried out, “ I have just now killed such a one, and such a one, and the rest shall not escape me.” “ That is well done, my lord,” answered the servant, “ but you and I must remain alive.”

Though the Caliph was still in the height of his fury, he was struck at the answer : he could not even help smiling at it, and having recollected that it was his servant, he put up his cymetar into the scabbard, and with
great

great composure conversed with him on the event of that fatal day. The servant easily foresaw the consequences of this cruel butchery; but he took care not to give the least hint of his apprehensions, for fear of rekindling the rage of that desperate man.

The reign of Motawakel was not only remarkable for the debaucheries, follies, and cruelties of that prince; the very elements seemed to declare against the Saracens; and there actually fell out at that time such uncommon and grievous events, as occasioned the reign of this Caliph to be called, The reign of prodigies, and scourges of the celestial ire.

Terrible earthquakes happened in Persia, in Syria, in Chorasan, and in Arabia Fælix. The earth opened, swallowed up whole cities, and destroyed an infinite number of Mussulmen. Bagdat also received a shock, but it was a trifle in comparison to what happened at Laodicea. That city, says El Makin, was totally overthrown; not one house was left standing; and but very few, of the great number of persons who inhabited that city and the neighbourhood, escaped the common calamity.

According to the same author, the springs at Mecca were almost entirely dried up, and water became so scarce, that it was sold for an hundred drachmas the load. Antioch also felt the same scourges as the other mussulman cities had undergone: an earthquake happened

MOTAWAKEL
Hegyra 240.
Ch. ær. 854.

Hegyra 241.
Ch. ær. 855.
Prodigies in
many parts of
the mussulman
empire.

Hegyra 242.
Ch. ær. 856.

MOTAWAKEL happened there, which destroyed a great many people, and threw down five hundred houses, and ninety of the towers of the walls of the city. A mountain called the Rock, burst in pieces and fell into the sea, which instantly foaming, there issued from it a thick black smoke, of an insupportable smell. In another part a river suddenly disappeared, and they could not discover at what place it drained away. About the same time the waters of the Tygris appeared as yellow as gold ; in three days afterwards it looked of the colour of blood. The thunder roared, and the lightning flashed on all sides ; and there were even some hurricanes so furious, as to tear up large trees by the roots, and carry them to a great distance in the country.

Hegyra 243.
Ch. ær. 857.

The Caliph
resolves to fix
his residence
at Damascus.

These violent shocks threw them into the utmost consternation : they knew not where to fix their abode with safety, and were filled with continual fears of a repetition of the same fatal tragedy. We are not told, whether it was on this account the Caliph changed his place of abode ; but it is certain, that in the 243d year of the Hegyra he departed from Samarath, and went to Damascus, with which he was so well pleased, that the next year he resolved to fix his residence there. He ordered some additional buildings to be made to the palace, and commanded his treasures to be conveyed to that city.

The

The utmost diligence was used to perform the Caliph's orders, when an event happened which made him suddenly alter his resolution. As he had been remiss in paying the Turkish troops, they made a great noise, and murmured that he should lay out such large sums in useless buildings, whilst the soldiery were put to great difficulties for want of their pay.

MOTAWAKEEL
Hegyra 244.
Ch. ær. 858.

The Caliph, who put his whole trust in that militia, removed the cause of their complaint, and gave orders timely enough to silence all clamour; but whether it was on account of their complaints of his expence in building, or through the natural fickleness of his disposition, is uncertain, but he soon quitted Damascus, and returned to the city of Samarath.

In the course of this year the Mussulmen were again afflicted with the scourge of earthquakes, which were so violent in Syria, Persia, Chorasán and Yeman, as to overturn whole cities, and destroy more than one hundred thousand of the inhabitants of those countries.

Hegyra 245.
Ch. ær. 859.

But whilst the mussulman empire was so deeply suffering from these fatal events, the Caliph's brutality, which was far from diminishing, was a scourge almost equally terrible, more especially, since he had entertained such strong suspicions of the design of his courtiers. Far from striving to reconcile them to him by acting with more moderation and humanity, he gave a loose
to

MOTAWAKEL to his fury; and if he did put a restraint on his natural inclination, it was with no other view than to secure himself from the attempts that might be made on his person.

Conversation
between the
Caliph and
his vizir.

He one day advised with Fatah, his vizir and favourite, on that subject. When this minister entered the Caliph's apartment, he saw a sword in his hand richly ornamented, which he seemed to view with great pleasure: the vizir highly commended the beauty and workmanship of the sword, which was, indeed, extremely fine, and had cost the Caliph ten thousand crowns: he then asked that prince to what use he intended to put the sword. "I wish," answered Motawakel, "I could find out one amongst my Turkish soldiers, on whose valour and fidelity I could rely; I would make him a present of this sword, and appoint him to guard my person."

He appoints
Bagher to
guard his per-
son.

Bagher, a Turkish officer, happening then to enter the Caliph's apartment, Fatah said to that prince, "Here comes Bagher, a man of more worth and bravery than any in the whole Turkish corps; and I am persuaded you cannot meet with a more proper person on whom to bestow your present." Motawakel forthwith ordered Bagher to approach, and put the sword into his hand, desiring he would keep a strict eye on all such as should approach his person. He at the same time appointed him a considerable salary, and enabled him to appear with dig-
nity.

nity in the post he had just bestowed on him. MOTAWAKEL
 It will soon appear what use Bagher made, Hegyra 245.
 both of the Caliph's sword and of the con- Ch. ær. 859.
 fidence he reposed in him.

It was not without reason that the Caliph Hegyra 246.
 took measures for the security of his person : Ch. ær. 860.
 he well knew his subjects loudly complained Wassif is dis-
 of his conduct, and that an insurrection contented.
 might happen in a moment, which might
 bring about the greatest revolutions ; yet,
 spite of his precautions, it seemed as if he
 had prepared all things for his own destruc-
 tion : for by imprudently raising a common
 Turkish officer to a place of so great trust,
 he angered Wassif, who was (as we have
 already observed) the commander in chief
 of the Turkish soldiery.

The Caliph had made him a present of
 some demesne lands in Persian Irak, and
 Fatah shewing a desire to have them, the
 Caliph resumed his gift, and bestowed it on
 Fatah. This affair was attended with bad
 consequences ; for whether that prince did
 not take care to give to Wassif any thing by
 way of indemnification, or whether the
 Turk was not willing to part with the lands,
 he entertained a most violent resentment
 against the Caliph, which he shewed the
 first favourable opportunity.

These discontents were a little suspended War against
 on account of the war carried on against the the Greeks,
 Greeks. The mussulman troops made an
 inroad on the territories of the eastern em-

MOTAWAKEL
Hegyra 247.
Ch. ær. 861.

peror, where they took an immense booty, together with seventy thousand Christians, whom they carried into slavery. The Saracens also attacked the Greeks by sea with equal success ; and this campaign concluded with an exchange of prisoners on both sides.

A conspiracy is formed by Montasser, and the commander in chief of the Turks.

At the return of the army from this campaign, and in the 247th year of the Hegyra, a resolution was formed to free the musulman empire from a prince, whose government had long been an insupportable yoke, not only to the people in general, but also to the nobility, and even to his own children.

The Caliph still continuing to behave ill to his own son, in his parties where they drank to excess, and at which he obliged him to be present ; the young prince conceived such an aversion to his father, that he took no pains to conceal his sentiments : though Motawakel was informed, how his son stood affected to him, he made not the least step towards a reconciliation with him ; on the contrary, he increased his ill-usage, and, instead of calling him Montasser, which was his real name, he gave him the nick-name of Monthader, signifying, Him who wishes the Death of his Father. This name having been given on all occasions, the prince was so displeased at hearing it, that at last he resolved actually to deserve it.

He was encouraged in this resolution by the commander of the Turkish troops, who, being

being unable to forget the injury the Caliph MOTAWAKEL had done him in refusing the demesnes he Hegyra 247. had bestowed on him, had long been meditating revenge : he held a conference on this subject with Montasser, who, shutting his ears against the voice of nature and of consanguinity, barbarously assented to the murder of his king, and of his father. He did not in the least hesitate at the commission of this double parricide ; for, by bad example, he had been long hardened in iniquity. Ch. ær. 861.

This unnatural son therefore complied with Waffif's proposal, and consented he should employ his troops in the execution of the fixed design. The general having conferred with the other Turkish officers on the proposed assassination, each man was ready to join in it ; and it was agreed they should fall on the Caliph the very first day he should drink to excess. Bagher, whom that prince had chosen as his especial guard, was appointed to strike the first blow ; and, in order to commit such a crime, he, for the first time, drew forth from the scabbard the sword which Motawakel had put into his hands.

The conspirators ran no risque of a long delay, in chusing for the effecting their scheme the first day the Caliph should drink beyond the bounds of reason ; for that prince was so fond of liquor as to leave no long intervals between the days he appointed for

MOTAWAKEL his debauches. Motawakel having there-
 fore invited his usual boon-companions to a
 great feast, they fixed on that day for his
 assassination: they waited till the Caliph
 and all the guests were far gone in liquor;
 and towards the close of the entertainment,
 Bagher, and the Turks that attended him,
 entered the room sword in hand.

The Caliph is
 assassinated.

One of the guests, who was the first that
 espied them, thought it was done by the
 Caliph's order, and expected to see some
 bloody scene which had been contrived by
 that prince; and as the sight was not at first
 so terrible as the appearance of wild beasts,
 whose fury was not easily to be avoided, he
 said in a joking strain, "This is not the day
 of lions, or serpents, or scorpions, but the
 day of swords." The Caliph, who did not
 see the Turks, as he sat with his back to the
 door at which they entered, said to the guest,
 "What do you mean by talking of swords?"
 He said no more, for Bagher and the other
 Turks falling on him mercilessly, slew him
 and all such as attempted to make the least
 resistance.

Fatah his vizir, who was then near him,
 strove to defend his master; but the odds
 against him were too great for him to suc-
 ceed: however, he threw himself into the
 midst of the conspirators, crying out, "O
 Motawakel! I will not survive thee!" A
 Turk took him at his word, and ran his
 sword through the vizir's body.

The

The Caliph's jester, who was present at MOTAWAKEL the entertainment, arose from table the moment he saw the swords, and hid himself under a canopy of state, whence he could see all that passed. Being terrified at the murder of Fatah, and such as attempted to defend the Caliph, he ventured to creep out of his hiding-place; and, in direct opposition to what the vizir had said, he cried out, "O Motawakel! I would survive thee with all my heart!" He thus escaped the hands of the murderers: or perhaps they gave themselves no concern about the life or death of such a personage.

Immediately after this massacre, Montasser shamefully entered the room where his father lay murdered. As they had cut the body of the wretched Caliph in pieces, Montasser was desirous to know how many parts of the body had been found; one of the slaves having answered six: "Search round," said Montasser, "there should be seven." He was immediately obeyed, and they found one of the Caliph's fingers, which made up the number of parts which the parricide was so anxious about; because he said, Motawakel had related, that in the dream in which he thought he saw Ali, he had received seven blows, which, in his opinion, denoted that the Caliph would be slain and cut into seven pieces. The base parricide therefore strove to make his father's murder pass as a punishment from heaven, to revenge the in-

MOTAWAKEL jury which the Caliph had done to the memory of Ali, the prophet's son-in-law, by prohibiting the pilgrimages performed to his tomb, and by demolishing the monument erected to the memory of Hosein his son, in the plain of Kerbela.

Hegyra 247.
Ch. ær. 861.

Such was the end of Motawakel, a prince remarkable only for the oddness and ferocity of his temper. It is however asserted, that he came into the world with better dispositions, but that by his inordinate love of wine, he destroyed the good gifts he had received from nature.

This prince left five children, namely, Montasser and Motaz, who attained the throne, and whose reigns were very short; Mowaiad, who was not Caliph; Motamed, who reigned, though he was excluded from the succession to the throne; and Muaffeck, who did not reign, but whose children possessed the crown.

The arts and sciences kept their ground during the reign of Motawakel; not that he had the honour of protecting them, but he left the learned in the situation he found them, without discouraging or favouring them; insomuch, that the provision made by his predecessors being sufficient for the progress of study, letters continued to be cultivated in the empire of the Saracens. The learned, indeed, had no access to the throne; but the prince who sat on it was not fit for such society.

There

There was, however, a man famous for MOTAWAKE^L his extensive knowledge, who had a great Hegyra 247. Ch. ær. 861. share in the Caliph's friendship; but he was of a profession, which made him necessary Baktishua a great favourite with the Caliph. to a debauched prince, whose health stood often in need of being mended. This learned man was a physician called Baktishua, whose father named Gabriel Baktishua, had exercised the same profession under some of the preceding Caliphs.

Motawakel admitted this physician to the greatest familiarities; he loved to converse with him on account of his wit and humour; and though some of his jests were very biting, the Caliph did not take offence at them. For example, it is related, that Baktishua going one day to pay his duty to the Caliph, the prince, who had a great deal to say to him, made the physician sit down by him, and began a conversation. The Caliph observing that the fringe round the fore part of the doctor's garment was a little unfewed at the top, during the discourse he employed himself in unripping the rest down to his middle. When he had made an end of speaking upon the subject in hand, he merrily asked, "How it might be known, when a man was arrived to such a degree of madness that he ought to be tied down?" The doctor laughing, immediately replied, "When he tears his physician's garment down to the very girdle." The Caliph, far from being displeased at this liberty,

MOTAWAKEL
Hegyra 247.
Ch. ær. 861.

berty, laughed heartily at the repartee, and dismissed the doctor with a present of a very fine vest and a sum of money.

So noble and generous a proceeding, would have been a plain proof of the goodness and humanity of a prince, who lays himself under an obligation of passing by many things in his inferiors, when he is so imprudent as to give them too great liberties; but as to Motawakel, the great familiarities he allowed to his intimate friends, and particularly to his physician, was rather an effect of the oddness of his humour, than the goodness of his disposition.

The physician
is disgraced.

I shall mention no other proof in support of this observation, than his behaviour on another occasion; when Baktishua, in making a proper return for the honour done him by his sovereign, fell on a sudden into the utmost disgrace.

Motawakel having one day sent word to his physician, that he, together with some of his nobles, would come and dine with him, Baktishua caused a dinner to be prepared suitable to such guests, which was served up with great order and magnificence. He caused his apartments to be adorned with his richest furniture, which shone with gold and silver; and the plate, which was placed on the table, was remarkable both for its beauty and workmanship.

The Caliph seemed highly pleased with his reception; but so soon as he was returned

home, he sent officers who seized all the MONTASSER.
 doctor's effects. In a few days the whole Hegyra 247.
 was exposed to sale, and Motawakel ap- Ch. ær. 861.
 propriated to himself all the money they
 produced. The unhappy physician, who
 thought himself so great a favourite with
 his master, was thus in a moment stripped
 of his whole fortune, and the grief he felt
 at so fatal an event, soon brought him to
 the grave.

He was the third physician of that name
 who had served the Abassian Caliphs. He
 was a Christian, and whilst he was in fa-
 vour, had done great services to those of his
 own communion. He had been very use-
 ful, as were also his predecessors, to such of
 the Caliphs as were lovers of the sciences;
 for to their labours the Saracens were in-
 debted for many Greek and Latin authors,
 which they translated into Arabick.

MONTASSER-BILLAH.

The THIRTIETH CALIPH.

THE next day after the assassination The Turks
 of Motawakel, the Turkish officers assume a right
 assembled themselves, and proclaimed Mon- of proclaim-
 tasser his son to be Caliph. His reign, and ing the Ca-
 his life, were both very short. So execrable liphs.
 a parricide did not deserve to enjoy a length
 of days.

Before

MONTASSER.

Hegyra 247.

Ch. ær. 861.

Before I enter upon the particular transactions of this reign, I think it will be proper to take some notice of the manner in which this prince was raised to the throne. The natives of the country did not bestow the crown. Foreigners arrogated to themselves the right of appointing a sovereign to rule the mussulman empire: he was proclaimed by the Turkish band; and the same thing happened at the elevation of Motawakel.

This encroachment on the rights and privileges of the nation, was a consequence of the too great power which the Caliphs had given to that body. Motasssem was the first that employed the Turks in his service; and had taken so great a liking to them, that he quitted his residence at Bagdat, where they were become insupportable through their insolence, and founded the city of Samarrath, there to live undisturbed with his favourite soldiers.

Those Turks gained still more power under the succeeding Caliphs, but chiefly during the reign of Motawakel, who entrusted them with the guard of his person, without reflecting, that by such a conduct he would cast a slur on the whole Arabian nation.

The great credit they gained by being possessed of so honourable a post, by degrees impaired the authority of the Caliphs, and caused all the misfortunes which befel the Abassians.

Abassians. The Turks rendered the dignity of a Caliph contemptible, and the illustrious house of Abbas was sacrificed to their interest, and became the sport of their caprices. We shall soon see them deposing sovereigns at their will, and transferring the crown to such princes as they thought would be most dependent upon them. The power, the fortune, the liberty, even the life of the Caliph, was in their hands ; in a word, they assumed the same power in the mussulman empire, as the mayors of the palace had gained in France during the first ages of the French monarchy.

MONTASSER.
Hegyra 247.
Ch. ær. 861.

Hence came the decay of the temporal authority of the Abassian Caliphs. Those princes indeed, after a while, shook off the yoke, and became the uncontrouled masters of their dominions ; but the Turks, encouraged by the remembrance of their former success, soon made fresh attempts, by means whereof they insensibly destroyed the power of the Abassians, with which they invested those of their own nation, after having reduced the Caliphate to a bare pontifical dignity, that is to say, almost to nothing.

On the morrow after the proclaiming of Montasser, the Turks held a general assembly, and debated on the present situation of affairs, as if the management of the state had belonged to them. One of their chiefs rising up made a speech to the following effect :
“ We have deprived Motawakel,” said he,
“ of

Measures they
take to sup-
port their au-
thority.

MONTASSER

Hegyra 247.

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“ of his throne, and of his life, and we have proclaimed his son; the people think him guilty, and look on him as an accomplice in his father’s death. That prince will inevitably become odious to his subjects; we shall also be detested by them, for we have given a proof to the nation of our strength, our credit, and the authority we are now possessed of; and this being known, have we not reason to fear? The more formidable we are become, the more are we hated. Can it be said that the prince whom we have placed on the throne, will not strive to clear himself from the suspicion raised against him, of having dipped his hands in his father’s blood? Remorse may spur him on to revenge the murder, that he may appear innocent in the eyes of the people: but supposing that motive not to be sufficiently prevalent with him; can we be assured that Montasser, through jealousy of our power, or fear of the loss of his life, or his throne, will not endeavour, not only to depress, but even to destroy us? Be assured the Arabians are capable of advising him how to take such a step. Our destruction will be resolved on; the whole nation will rise up in arms against us; and how can we avoid ruin in such a juncture? Besides, though Montasser either will not, or dare not, follow the council which the Arabians will probably give him, have we nothing to fear from his two brothers, who are appointed successively to reign after him? Those princes were not accomplices

accomplices with Montasser, nor had they MONTASSER.
 any hand in the death of Motawakel; and can Hegyra 247.
 you doubt, if they should ascend the throne, Ch. ær. 861.
 whether they would strive to avenge the
 murder of their father? If those princes should
 not do so, will they not have cause to fear
 us, and will they not endeavour to break
 our corps? For my part," added the officer,
 "I think, that if we make the Caliphs trem-
 ble, we have at least as much to fear from
 them."

This speech made a great impression upon
 the whole assembly; but as it tended only to
 shew the fears they ought to entertain, and
 the difficulties they might reasonably expect
 to meet with, Bagher arose, and begged that
 officer to give them his opinion, how they
 might best prevent the inconveniencies they
 apprehended from the Caliph and his bro-
 thers.

"There is but one method to be taken," re-
 ply'd the officer: "we must compel Montasser
 to exclude his two brothers from the throne;
 we shall otherwise be exposed to a continual
 apprehension; but if the Caliph consents,
 we shall be always masters of the empire."

In consequence of these deliberations the
 chief officers of the Turkish band went to
 the Caliph, and moved him to declare null
 and void the order of Motawakel, by virtue
 of which Montasser's brothers were to succeed
 to the throne; and they gilded this bitter pill
 with a promise of acknowledging his son to be
 his

They oblige
 Montasser's
 two brother's
 to renounce
 the Caliphate.

MONTASSER. his successor, and of causing the oath of allegiance to be taken to him.
 Hegyra 247.
 Ch. ær. 861.

The Caliph was greatly amazed at this proposal. He then found he was no better than a slave to the Turks, and that they would soon set no bounds to their demands; however, he dared not let them know what he thought of their proceedings; but as the matter they proposed to him was of great importance, he desired a day's time to consider of it.

Montasser having maturely reflected on the affair, sent for his two brothers; he told them (with looks full of concern) that he was forced to let them know they must give over all thoughts, and even surrender all right, of succeeding to his dominions. He begged them to be assured that he was by no means the author of so great a piece of injustice, and that it was not the least satisfaction to him to find the crown destined for his son, who was but a child, and who would not be of an age fit to reign at the time he was persuaded he should die; but that the Turks, whose strength, power, and arrogance, they were no strangers to, had forced him to undertake so disagreeable an office. He assured them, that in case of a refusal on their part, neither he nor they could be sure of their lives; he therefore advised them to consult together, and acquaint him with their resolution.

The two princes, full as much amazed as their brother had been at this insolent proposal
 of

of the Turks, were for some time deprived MONTASSER.
of the power of returning any answer; but Hegyra 247.
having a little recovered their surprize, they Ch. ær. 861.
conferred together on this strange demand.
Having well considered all things, and finding
the power of the Turks was predominant, they
resolved to yield to the present exigency; and
in order to save their lives, they signed an un-
conditional abdication of their right and title
to the Caliphate on the demise of Montasser.
This cession seemed to satisfy the Turks, who
afterwards remained very quiet.

The bloody Montasser, who was then sen- Hegyra 248.
sible, that in giving so great countenance to Ch. ær. 862.
the Turkish band, he had forged his own
chains, was still more sensibly affected by the
cruel remorse he felt on account of the crime
he had committed in shedding his father's
blood. Though he had coolly considered the
parricide before it was committed, yet, when
the deed was done, the crying sin stared him
full in the face. He used his utmost endea-
vours to impose on the people, touching his
unnatural dealings: he commanded his mini-
sters to write letters unto all the provinces of
the empire, signifying, that the Caliph his
father was assassinated by the procurement
of Fatah, his vizir; and that Fatah had been
punished on the spot, having been himself
slain during the hurry and confusion of that
base enterprize.

Montasser is
terrified at the
thoughts of
his parricide.

But these false pretences gained not the
least credit. The report of this parricide was
already

MONTASSER.
Hegyra 248.
Ch. ær. 862.

already spread far and near ; no person doubted that Montasser was the author of it, and he was never mentioned but with the utmost execrations. His life became a burthen to him ; and being continually disturbed by the gloomy vapours which arose from a reflection on his past crime, he was a stranger to sleep, or if he ever closed his eyes to rest, he was haunted with frightful dreams : the bloody image of his father was present to his imagination, and seemed to reproach him in the bitterest manner.

El Makin reports, that Montasser awaking one night suddenly out of his sleep, was heard to make great moan : one of his servants, who was near, going to the Caliph to enquire the cause, the wretched prince told him, he had just seen Motawakel, and that he had uttered words which made his hair stand an end. “ Alas ! thou hast murdered me,” said he, “ thou hast robbed me, thou hast deprived me of my Caliphate ; but by the living God, thou shalt not long enjoy them, for thou wilt soon be plunged into hell-fire.”

This was the dream, at which the Caliph was so terrified. They endeavoured to cheer him by reminding him that a sensible man would pay no regard to such fancies ; they advised him to go abroad, to take exercise and amuse himself with diversions to dispel those melancholy thoughts which were generated by too sedentary a way of life,

Montasser

Montasser followed their advice ; but the MONTASSER.
 cause of his terrors was too deeply rooted in Hegyra 248.
 his imagination to be ever totally eradicated ; Ch. ær. 862.
 and, which added to the misfortune, it frequently happened, that in the attempt he made to amuse himself, and drive away his cares, he chanced to meet with objects which added to his remorse, and set his guilt before his eyes in its blackest colours.

To this purpose, Najaristan has related a very extraordinary fact. Montasser having one day proposed to divert himself with looking over his wardrobe, they laid before him a fine piece of tapestry which had formerly been taken from the palace of the kings of Persia. It represented a man on horseback, wearing a turban, surrounded by a large circle, on which was some writing in Persian characters. None of the persons present being able to read the legend, the Caliph sent for an interpreter, who had no sooner cast his eyes on the writing, than he seemed struck with surprise, and strove to decline giving the Caliph the interpretation of the words, by saying they only related to some trifling matters in Persia. But the prince still insisting to be informed, the interpreter again evaded an explanation, by pretending he could not clearly understand the meaning of the characters. But Montasser shewing signs of anger, he was at last forced to obey. The interpreter therefore told him that the legend of the tapestry

MONTASSER.
Hegyra 248.
Ch. ær. 862

imported in exprefs terms, “ I am Siroës *, the fon of Chofroës, who killed my father, and enjoyed the kingdom only fix months.” At this the Caliph turned pale, departed instantly, and shut himfelf up in his chamber.

The death of
Montaffer.

The prince therefore having vainly fought to ease his troubled breast, fell into the deepeft melancholy, which would not give way to any of the medicines applied for his relief. In this ftate he languifhed during fix months, and was then feized with a continual fever, which carried him off in the 248th year of the Hegyra, and the 862d of the Christian æra. Some authors fay, that this prince was poisoned by an officer of the Turkish troops ; others relate, that having a defluxion in his ear, they put into it fome linen dipped in fome kind of oil, that his head fwelled greatly, and he foon died.

The Caliph’s
character.

This Caliph, according to El Makin, was of a middle ftature, but exceffively corpulent ; he had a fair complexion, and very fine eyes. As to his character, the fame author fays, he was a man of great refolution and courage : he had alfo a great talent for poetry ; and it is even afferted, that fome excellent verfes of his compofing ftill remain.

* Siroës was the eldeft fon of Chofroës the II^d, king of Perfia. That prince having given the crown to a younger fon, Siroës being enraged, threw his father into prifon, and put him to death fifteen days afterwards, with all his children. This fact happened in the fix hundred and twenty-eighth year of the Christian æra. Siroës himfelf died in a fhort time.

If the inhuman Motawakel had not done MONTASSER.
 all in his power to ruin his temper, he might Hegyra 248.
 have shone amongst the foremost of the Ch. ær. 862.
 Abassian princes ; but the pernicious exam-
 ple of the father destroyed every seed of
 goodness in the son, and drove him to the
 commission of that horrid crime ; the re-
 membrance whereof put an end both to his
 peace of mind and to his days.

Khondemir relates a passage, which shews,
 that this prince was susceptible of friendship
 and generosity. One of his officers having
 performed to his satisfaction a business on
 which he was sent to Egypt, the Caliph, on
 his return, asked him what he thought of
 that country ; and amongst other things, was
 importunate to know if he had not left his
 heart behind him.

The officer confessed, that he had seen a Instance of the
 woman who had charmed him ; but that, for Caliph's gene-
 want of money, he was forced to give over rosity.
 all thoughts of an object who had raised a
 violent flame in his breast. She was a young
 slave of admirable wit and accomplishments,
 who sung to a miracle, and was besides a
 faultless beauty. He assured the Caliph, that
 he would with pleasure have sacrificed his
 whole fortune to become master of so inva-
 luable a treasure ; and that the reflections he
 made on the impossibility of ever possessing
 the darling of his soul, filled him with grief,
 which would never be ended but with his
 life.

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Hegyra 248.

Ch. ær. 862.

The Caliph was moved at the officer's grief; and having, by means of the further enquiries he made touching the object of his passion, gained all the information he thought necessary, he dismissed the officer, without dropping the least hint of his design. So soon as he was departed, Montasser wrote to the governor of Egypt, and commanded him to make a strict search in all the cities under his government for the slave, (of whom he gave a description agreeable to the account he had received from the officer) and to send her with the utmost speed to Samarath.

His orders were punctually executed; and the fair slave was soon brought to his court. The prince gave her in charge to one of his eunuchs, and commanded him to take care she should be richly dressed, and not to mention her arrival to any person whatsoever, till he should receive further orders from him.

After the slave had been some time at court, Montasser sent for the officer he intended to oblige; and at the same time caused the slave to be concealed behind a screen. The officer being come, the Caliph talked with him a while on indifferent things, and then ordered one of his attendants to bring the slave who had the best voice, that he might be entertained with a song; and having been told that there was one ready to obey his commands, he ordered that she should begin.

The

The moment the officer heard the voice, he MONTASSER.
 seemed confused and like one out of his wits. Hegyra 248.
 The Caliph, who took a pleasure in seeing Ch. ær. 862.
 his great perplexity, pressed him to declare
 the cause of his emotion. “Commander of
 the faithful,” answered the officer, “from
 the sound of that voice I should think, that
 either I was in Egypt, or that the finger I
 mentioned to you is here.”

Montasser having caused the slave to cease
 her strain, asked the officer, if he still loved
 her? The question perplexed him yet more,
 as he feared the Caliph had fallen in love with
 her, upon the account he had given him of
 her perfections, and had caused her to be
 brought from Egypt; however, he did not
 think fit to disguise his sentiments, and said
 to the prince, “Yes, my lord, I still love
 her; but as I can no longer entertain any
 hopes of possessing her, I will endeavour by
 degrees to stifle the flame she has raised in my
 breast.”

The Caliph then acquainted the officer
 with the means he had used to oblige him;
 and told him with great kindness, that he
 bought the slave with no other view than to
 make a present of her to him. The prince
 having caused the singer to come forth, pre-
 sented her to the officer, and dismissed them
 both with great marks of friendship. Such a
 fact will appear the more extraordinary, as sen-
 sibility and complacency do not seem com-
 patible with so rough and savage a disposition
 as that of Montasser.

MOSTAIN.

Hegyra 248.

Ch. ær. 862.

M O S T A I N - B I L L A H.

The THIRTY-FIRST CALIPH.

SO soon as the death of Montasser was made publick, the chiefs of the Turkish troops, who still continued to give law in the state, assembled their body, and held a consultation touching the person they should place on the throne.

Mostain is proclaimed Caliph.

They unanimously excluded the two brothers of Montasser ; and then elected for Caliph, Mostain, the son of Mohammed and grandson to the Caliph Motassem. Motaz, Montasser's brother, and son of Motawakel, endeavoured to revive his pretensions to the Caliphate ; but he was forced to submit, and the Turkish party remained victorious.

Hegyra 249.
Ch. ær. 863.

So unconstitutional an election, carried by men who had no authority but what they arrogated to themselves, put all things into combustion at Samarath, and even at Bagdat. The Mussulmen, enraged at the insolence of the Turks, took up arms many times in order to depress their power ; the latter defended themselves with great resolution. The whole country was full of confusion, and no means could be contrived to put an end to the disorders.

In the midst of these tumults, news was brought that the Alians were in motion, in order

order to set the descendants of Ali on the throne. Jahia ben Omar, a prince of that race, having heard of Mostain's election, and of the disturbances which had ensued thereon, even in the very capital of his dominions, rose up in arms against that prince, and was soon at the head of a strong party, who solemnly proclaimed him Caliph at Cufah, and in the several provinces of Arabian Irak.

MOSTAIN.

Hegyra 250.
Ch. ær. 864.

The Alians
chuse a Caliph
of their house.

Mostain being unable to raise troops to stop the enterprizes of Jahia, on account of the dissentions and troubles which prevailed in Samarath and at Bagdat, that Caliph had recourse to Mohammed ebn Abdallah, grandson of the famous Thaher, who, having set up as a sovereign, (as already observed) had transmitted his dominions to his posterity. It does not appear that any of the Caliphs had attempted to destroy that Dynasty, which arose to the great detriment of the Caliph's interest and authority. Mostain was so far from attacking the descendants of Thaher, that, on the contrary, he entered into an alliance with them; and Mohammed, who was then the reigning monarch of that house, was appointed general of the Caliph's forces.

Mostain sends
out against
him Moham-
med, grandson
of Thaher.

He marched out with a strong army of Mussulmen; and repairing to that province where the rebels were most powerful, he acted with such great prudence, that he soon prevailed on the people to submit to their duty.

Jahia is killed,
and his party
defeated.

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Hegyra 250.

Ch. ær. 864.

duty. Jahia endeavoured to put a stop to Mohammed's success; he appeared at the head of his troops to dispute the passes with him: but his undertaking did not prove successful. The Caliph's general, who was experienced in the art of war, found means to bring on an action, which proved decisive: Jahia's troops were totally routed, and he was killed on the spot. His head was brought to Mohammed, who forthwith sent it to Mostain. The head was fixed up in a publick place at Samarath, and was afterwards put into a chest at the arsenal.

Another Alian
is proclaimed
in Tabarestan.

Whilst they were employed in destroying one Alian, another arose in Tabarestan, much more capable of supporting his pretensions, than he who had appeared at Cufah. This prince was called Hasan ben Yezid, and had assumed as a surname Al-das-el-Allah, that is to say, "He that invites men to follow truth and justice." This new Caliph was attended with the greatest success: he maintained his dignity nineteen years, and even left it as an inheritance to his brother Mohammed Cassem, who also quietly enjoyed it many years. The great broils which had happened in the very heart of the musulman dominions, were doubtless the cause which prevented the Abassians from putting an end to the enterprizes of that rebellious descendant of Ali.

As to Mostain, it would have been very difficult for him to have taken the least step
against

against that rebel. Division had arisen MOSTAIN.
amongst the Turks, and the sovereign was Hegyra 250.
at a loss which side he should take in order Ch. ær. 864.
to preserve his dignity.

The quarrel arose on the following ac- Hegyra 251.
count. Waffif, the commander of the Ch. ær. 865.
Turkish troops, and Bagher, one of their A quarrel
chief officers, were competitors for some amongst the
favour, which they both solicited at the Turks causes
same time. The Caliph having given the a sedition.
preference to Waffif, Bagher was enraged
at the denial; and having assembled his
friends, he proposed to them not only to
kill his commanding officer, but also to de-
throne the Caliph, and put another in his
stead.

This conference was not so secretly ma-
naged, but that Mostain was informed of it.
The prince, astonished at so strange a reso-
lution, exerted his authority, by causing
Bagher to be seized in the imperial palace.
The Turks of his party ran to arms in order
to release him; and such of them as sided
with Waffif, armed themselves at the same
time, to oppose the designs of the former.

Mostain not knowing how to act in such
a dilemma, held a council with Waffif, and
another Turkish officer called Buga. Those
two captains, who ever since the commence-
ment of the dispute had been bitter enemies
to Bagher, remonstrated to the Caliph that
it was absolutely necessary to make away
with him; for that if he suffered Bagher to
live,

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Hegyra 251.

Ch. ær. 865.

live, he would run a risque of losing both his crown and his life. Mostain followed their advice; and it proved to be the source of fresh tumults. Such of the Turks as adhered to Bagher, were seized with fury when they knew their chief had been put to death. The first step they took to revenge the murder, was to plunder part of the city of Samarath: they then came in a tumultuous manner to the palace, and told the Caliph, that if he did not forthwith deliver up Waffif and Buga into their hands, they would lay the whole edifice in ashes by the next morning.

These two officers, who had given the Caliph such advice, on a supposition that when the opposite party were deprived of their leader, they would content themselves with complaining loudly, without taking any further seditious steps, were greatly amazed to see them plunder the city; but they were still more astonished to find, that by his death they were become the chief objects of the fury of that militia.

In so critical a juncture, Waffif and Buga could think of no better expedient to extricate themselves from the danger, than speedily to fly from Samarath: but this step might have proved very hazardous; for if they had left the Caliph in the hands of those desperadoes, they would probably have compelled that prince to proscribe them; or if he refused to comply, they
might

might have deposed him, and set up a MOSTAIN.
 Caliph in his stead, who was absolutely de- Hegyra 251.
 voted to them. To prevent these inconve- Ch. ær. 865.
 niencies, therefore, as much as lay in their
 power, they resolved that the Caliph should
 accompany them in their flight; and the
 night after the insurrection, Mostain, Waffif,
 and Buga, secretly departed from Samarath,
 and went to the city of Bagdat.

The mutineers returning to the imperial
 palace the next morning, to demand that
 the chiefs might be delivered up to them,
 were greatly surpris'd to find they had with-
 drawn themselves, together with Mostain.
 They now began to repent of the insult they
 had committed upon the prince, as well as of
 the outrages they had done in the city : they
 feared the Arabians would no longer suffer
 the power to remain in the hands of the
 Turks, and that they would take measures,
 in concert with the Caliph, to shake off a
 yoke which must be insupportable to them.

They were in hopes of bringing matters
 back into the former channel, by laying down
 their arms, and sending deputies to Bagdat,
 to testify to the Caliph their sorrow for what
 had pass'd, and intreat him to return to his
 capital, promising that, for the future, they
 would serve him with zeal and respect, and
 do all in their power to efface the remem-
 brance of their criminal design.

This measure having been resolved on in The Turks
 an assembly of the Turks, they instantly make propo-
 sent sals, which
 are rejected.

MOSTAIN.

Hegyra 251.
Ch. ær. 865.

sent deputies to Bagdat, but to no purpose, for they were denied audience; and Mostain did not so much as know that such a deputation had been sent, till it was too late to remedy the misfortunes which arose from that denial.

The governor of Bagdat. was the sole cause of the violent steps which were taken by the Turks on this occasion. It was the same Mahomet, the grandson of Thaher, to whom that government had been given, as a reward for the victory he obtained at Cufah over the rebel Jahia. On his return, the Caliph confirmed to him the sovereignty of Chorasan, which his grandfather had usurped from the Abassians; and moreover, to induce him to reside in his dominions, he bestowed on him the government of Bagdat, where he ruled like an independent monarch. Mohammed, who was well pleased to find the Caliph in his power, resolved to keep him in his hands: to this end he gave a bad reception to the deputies; and notwithstanding their earnest entreaties to gain an audience, the governor not only denied their request, but even dismissed them very roughly.

Hegyra 252.
Ch. ær. 866.

They were therefore obliged to return to Samarath, with no other answer than an account of the ill treatment they had received from the governor. So insolent a flight of their proposals, raised the indignation of the Turks, who resolved to depose Mostain,

Mostain, and raise to the throne Motaz, MOSTAIN.
whom they had so lately deprived of his Hegyra 252.
right to the crown. Ch. ær. 866.

It was therefore soon published in all parts Therebels de-
of Samarath, that Mostain, for certain good pose Mostain,
causes, was deposed from the Caliphate; and proclaim
and on the same day the Turkish band Motaz in his
placed Motaz on the throne. There were stead.
at this time two Caliphs; the one at Sama-
rath, the other at Bagdat, both of them sup-
ported by Turks of different factions; but
the former was by much the strongest, and
soon got the better of the latter.

So soon as Motaz was proclaimed Caliph,
the Turks, whose creature he was, obliged
him speedily to raise a body of troops, that
he might march to Bagdat, and besiege Mos-
tain and his adherents. That prince, whose
interest it was to take all possible measures
to secure to himself a crown he had been al-
ready so near losing, gave immediate orders
to assemble an army: the Turks, who were
personally interested in the undertaking, for-
warded the preparations to the utmost of
their power; and in a short time a nume-
rous body of forces was made ready, which
he caused to march to Bagdat, under the
command of Muaffek his brother.

Though the Caliph of Bagdat was in-
formed of the preparations that were making
against him; yet, to the astonishment of all
men, he remained inactive, without providing
for his defence. The governor himself, who
was

MOSTAIN. was a warlike man, seemed full as easy as the Caliph : in the mean time, the army of Hegyra 252. Motaz continually approached ; and at last Ch. ær. 866. intelligence was brought, that they would shortly set down before Bagdat.

Mostain is abandoned by his party.

The Turks who had accompanied Mostain to that city, together with Waffif and Buga their chiefs, openly murmured at the indolence of that prince, who was about to expose them to fall a sacrifice to the troops of Motaz ; but finding their complaints were disregarded by the governor, and even by the Caliph, they resolved to treat with the enemy : they therefore sent messengers to the general, and offered to acknowledge Motaz as sole and lawful Caliph, if he would cease all hostilities against them.

The governor of Bagdat, who probably deferred submitting to Motaz until some person had led the way, followed the example of the Turks. He wrote to Muaffek, that if the Caliph of Samarath would promise to continue him in the government of Bagdat, and at the same time engage to make no attempt on Mostain's life, he would readily take the oath of allegiance to him, and would also endeavour to prevail on Mostain to resign the Caliphate. The governor comprehended Waffif and Buga in the treaty, and represented, that as those two officers had the greatest influence over Mostain, and had engaged to induce him to make his abdication,

dications, assurances ought to be given them MOSTAIN.
as to the safety of their persons. Hegyra 252.
Ch. ær. 866.

These terms having been offered to Mu-
affek, he forthwith sent a courier to Sama-
rath, to communicate them to Motaz : that He abdicates
the Caliphate.
prince accepted them, and consequently
withdrew his forces. Mostain was therefore
obliged to resign the Caliphate to Motaz, and
to lead a private life. They appointed for
his residence the magnificent palace of Bag-
dat, and assigned him a revenue suitable to
his birth and condition ; however, as Motaz
always mistrusted that prince, he at first or-
dered him to be strictly guarded : in a short
time, having entertained some suspicions of
him, (but whether with or without founda-
tion, authors do not say) he caused him to
be brought to Samarath, and gave him in
charge to Saïd his vizir. That minister be-
ing sensible, that the Caliph's design was to
put it out of Mostain's power to disturb him, His death.
found means to make away with him.

The account given by El Makin of this
Caliph's death, is somewhat different. He
says, that the prince having resigned his dig-
nity, Motaz was proclaimed at Bagdat ; that
Mostain was afterwards carried to a castle,
where Motaz caused his head to be cut off.
The person who was appointed to perform
the execution, being returned to Samarath
with the head, went to the palace to pre-
sent it to the Caliph. Motaz was then play-
ing at chess, and they interrupted him to
let

MOTAZ.

Hegyra 252.

Ch. ær. 866.

let him know Mostain's head was brought. The Caliph cooly answered, " Let them wait till I have finished my game." Having made an end of it, he arose, and went and viewed the head, and seemed well pleased at the sight: he afterwards ordered it to be buried.

Mostain reigned only three years and some months. He was about one-and-thirty years old. We are not told, whether he left any children or not.

M O T A Z-B I L L A H.

The THIRTY-SECOND CALIPH.

Motaz confirms Mohammed in the sovereignty of Chorasan.

MOTAZ having been proclaimed Caliph at Bagdat, and at Samarath, forthwith shewed his gratitude for the service Mohammed had done him, in not taking up arms to defend Mostain, (who had fled for shelter to his government) and in compelling that prince to abdicate the Caliphate. He confirmed to him the absolute sovereignty of Chorasan, and the possession of the government of Bagdat.

The new Caliph finding himself in peaceable possession of the mussulman throne, made serious reflections on what had passed in the empire during many years. The death of his father, his exclusion from the Caliphate, the election of Mostain in his stead,

stead, and finally the deposition of that Caliph, after which he had been restored to his rights; all which revolutions were brought about by the intrigues of the Turks, thoroughly convinced him, that if speedy measures were not taken, the Caliphs would be always subject to the will and ambition of that insolent soldiery, who, though foreigners, had presumed to intermeddle in the government of the state.

To remedy this inconvenience, Motaz formed a design, absolutely to free himself from this militia. He proposed in the first place to destroy the chief officers; after which he was in hopes he should meet with no difficulty in breaking that corps. He had a long conference on this subject with Ahmed ben Ismael, whom he appointed vizir at his accession to the throne. That minister absolutely dissuaded him from executing the design: he shewed him that the attempt might be attended with very fatal consequences; and that he himself might perhaps fall a sacrifice to the fury of those desperate men, ere he would be able to diminish their power.

The Caliph therefore gave over the enterprise, and suddenly fell into the contrary extreme; for he contracted a friendship with Waffif, and the other commanders of that body. He gave them considerable posts, and assigned them large revenues, which only

MOTAZ.

Hegyra 252.

Ch. ær. 866.

Motaz causes
his brother to
be put to
death.

served to increase their authority, and render them more formidable.

He was soon made sensible of the fault he had committed. As he was naturally apt to go from one extreme to another, he suspected his brother Mouïad, because he was a favourite with the people, and might easily have put himself at the head of a party: on this suspicion he determined to cause him to be apprehended. The Turks, who loved that young prince, shewed their displeasure on that account, and even threatened to break open the prison where he was confined. The Caliph prevented them by putting him to death; and that the murder might not be laid to his charge, he sent some persons to the prison, who enclosed the prince in a large skin of ermine, well furred*, till they stifled him. When he was dead, the Caliph caused him to be exposed to publick view, that all the world might imagine he died a natural death.

Hegyra 253.

Ch. ær. 867.

This expedient answered the Caliph's purpose; and the Turks, not suspecting that prince was guilty of the death of his brother, suffered this event to pass quietly over:

* Mouïad dying in prison, it was reported in Bagdat, that Motaz commanded those that guarded Mouïad, to lay him naked and bound in the snow, that he might die with the cold; and that the Caliph being informed of the report, caused the body to be wrapped up in the skin of an ermine, and exposed to publick view, to persuade the world that he died a natural death. D'Herbelot, p. 645.

but in the beginning of the following year, MOTAZ.
 they shewed their discontent on account of Hegyra 253.
 their pay, which was retarded a few days. Ch. ær. 867.
 This delay caused an infurrection, which had The Turks
 like to have put the whole city of Samarath mutiny.
 in a combustion : their officers strove in vain
 to appease them ; they would not hear them
 speak. Waffif their commander, who was
 then at court, went to them immediately, by
 the Caliph's order, reckoning that his pre-
 sence would put a stop to the mutiny : but
 they laughed at his remonstrances ; and the
 commander attempting to put his authority
 in execution, they fell on him and slew him.
 In the heighth of their fury they threatened
 to plunder the city ; it became therefore ab-
 solutely necessary, to find the most speedy
 means of satisfying them ; and, by the help
 of a large sum of money, an end was put
 to the revolt.

This mutinous behaviour, and these me- Hegyra 254.
 naces of the Turks, so plainly manifested Ch. ær. 868.
 their contempt of the Caliph's authority, Buga retires,
 that he was highly displeased with that sol- which causes
 diery ; and in particular with their officers, a new insur-
 for not introducing amongst them a strict rection.
 discipline, which they stood so much in need
 of : however, he strove to conceal his dis-
 pleasure. But one of the chief officers of
 that corps soon perceived, that his presence
 was no longer so agreeable to the Caliph, as
 it had formerly been ; he therefore resolved
 to absent himself from court, and retire, fore-

MOTAZ.

Hegyra 254.
Ch. ær. 868.

seeing that the Turks would revolt on account of his absence, and that he might thereby be furnished with an opportunity of punishing the Caliph for his coldness.

Things fell out as he foresaw. Buga, (for so the officer was called) who was surnamed the Senior, to distinguish him from his younger brother, who had a command in the same body; Buga, I say, suddenly departed from Samarath, and retired to the city of Mossul, where he waited for the effects which he doubted not would be produced by his flight; and he soon received advice of the great disorders his soldiers had committed.

So soon as the Turks were informed of his retreat, they ran to arms, and advanced even to the imperial palace, where they insolently plundered great part of what they found in the apartments, and then retired to their quarters. Buga was no sooner informed of this transaction, than he returned to Samarath with some new companies of Turks; he caused a report to be spread, that he was come to punish the factious, whose insurrection he found was to be laid to his charge.

Buga is defeated and killed.

The Caliph, who had received private intelligence, that Buga's real design was to make an attempt upon his person, appointed an officer of distinction named Walid-al-Magrebi, who was a person of great credit amongst the Mussulmen, to provide for his defence. That officer brought over a great number

number of persons to the Caliph's interest, MOTAZ.
 and at last assembled a body of troops sufficient to face the Turks. He marched up to Buga, and attacked him with so much vigour and success, that the rebels were defeated, and their commander was taken prisoner. Walid forthwith sent the news of this victory to the Caliph, who ordered Buga's head to be cut off and brought to him. This order was executed without delay, and the sedition was for a while appeased. Hegyra 254.
Ch. ær. 868.

The death of Buga caused the Turks seriously to reflect on the treatment they would certainly meet with from the Caliph, in case they suffered him to improve the advantage he had lately gained ; but on the other hand they were at a loss to determine what measures they should take in order to keep him in awe, and prevent him from using them with severity. They were indeed all stout men, and able and willing to fight on occasion ; but that was not enough : it was necessary to foresee events at a great distance, to avoid them, or at least to be capable of artfully turning them to their own advantage. These things were not to be expected from rude soldiers ; it was therefore necessary to appoint a chief, able to form operations, and preside over the execution of them, which the multitude was in no wise able to do. They were then thoroughly sensible of the loss they had sustained by the death of

Hegyra 255.
Ch. ær. 869.

The Turks
chuse Saled to
be their chief.

MOTAZ.

Hegyra 255.

Ch. ær. 869.

Waffif, of Bagher, and of Buga; and they strove in some sort to repair it, by appointing for their chief commander Saled, the son of the same Waffif; and they chose for his colleague in the command Mohammed, the son of the same Buga, whose head the Caliph had commanded to be struck off, after he had been defeated by Walid.

This election was no sooner over, than they raised new disturbances in the state; their complaints always turned upon the withholding their pay: and it is amazing, that after the first inconvenience they felt from them, proper measures were not taken to break those mutineers, in case they had thought fit to get rid of them, or to furnish money for their punctual payment, if they resolved to keep them on foot.

But the Caliph and his ministers were unhappily in a kind of lethargy, which prevented them from using the due means of preserving the peace and tranquillity of the state: this negligence was the cause of the Caliph's destruction. The Turks having, with their accustomed insolence, demanded their money, they were refused, and told there was none for them. This answer, so unlikely to prove satisfactory to a set of mutineers, threw the Turks into a rage, and induced them to commit the greatest excesses.

They commit
fresh vio-
lences.

They went in a body to attack the vizir in his house; they ill-treated him, and took
away

away all they could lay their hands on. MOTAZ.
 From thence they marched to the imperial Hegyra 255.
 palace, and, having seized all the avenues, Ch. ær. 869.
 appointed some of their officers to go to the
 Caliph's apartment, and force him either to
 give them their pay or resign the crown.

These officers performed their orders with They kill the
 as much brutality as their principals could Caliph.
 desire. Having met with a denial from the
 prince, they forcibly pulled him down from
 his throne; and dragging him about by the
 feet, they beat him most unmercifully, and
 finally obliged him to resign the Caliphate.

The wretched Caliph died in a short time :
 but historians do not agree in the accounts
 they give of his death. Some say that the
 Turks shut him up in a stove, and he
 having asked for something to drink, they
 gave him iced water mixed with poison.
 Others relate, that they banished him to
 Bagdat, where they gave him meat, but de-
 nied him any drink, and that at last he died
 of thirst.

El Makin tells us, that they kept him
 three days without either food or liquor; and
 afterwards shut him up in a cellar, where he
 was found dead the next morning.

This prince died about the middle of the
 fourth year of his reign, aged only twenty
 years. He was a very voluptuous man, says
 El Makin, and heeded nothing but his plea-
 sures, for the sake of which he totally neg-
 lected all business of the state.

MOTAZ.

Hegyra 255.
Ch. ær. 869.Prodigious
avarice of the
Caliph's mother.

Abu'l Faragius relates something very extraordinary, touching the mother of this prince, whose name was Cahibah. This woman was possessed of immense treasures, which she kept concealed at Samarath, where she resided, and where she was, more than once, a witness to the outrages committed by the Turks on her son, for want of their pay ; and on the last occurrence, in which the Caliph lost his life, it was in her power to have quelled the insurrection, only by sacrificing a small portion of her riches : but this avaricious and unnatural mother chose rather to see her son perish, than to part with the least trifle to save him.

The Caliph who succeeded Motaz, forced this princess to confess where her treasure was hid ; and they found, according to Abu'l Faragius, several millions of gold, a bushel-full of emeralds, as many of the finest and largest sort of pearls, and half a bushel of red hyacinths : and though possessed of such an heap of riches, the cruel parent suffered her son to be deprived of the crown, for want of money to preserve it.

MOTHADI-

M O T H A D I - B I L L A H. MOTHADI.Hegyra 255.
Ch. ar. 869.

The THIRTY-THIRD CALIPH.

MOTHADI was the son of Wathek-Billah, who possessed the mussulman throne immediately after Motassem. He was, like his predecessor, raised to the Caliphate by the Turks; and like him, he fell a sacrifice to their brutality.

This prince was formed to reign in better times. Born with those qualities which adorn a throne, and do honour to humanity, he would have revived amongst the Mussulmen the golden days of Omar and of Mammon; but having attempted to correct the insolent behaviour of seditious men, they revolted against him, and put him to a cruel death, after he had reigned about eleven months.

The divisions which had so long prevailed in his dominions, having brought on a general confusion, the Caliph, with great spirit, undertook in person to remedy so great a misfortune. This prince therefore gave notice that, for the future, his people should not apply for redress to his ministers, but to himself. He was resolved to enquire into their differences and disputes, and to strive to accommodate them: he also brought the expences of his household within due bounds; and

Methods Mo-
thadi takes to
correct the er-
rors which
had crept into
the govern-
ment.

MOTHADI.

Hegyra 255.

Ch. ær. 869.

and far from following the example set by the generality of his predecessors, who were always in want of money to pay their troops, whilst they spent immense sums in feasts, and in useless pomp and ceremonies, he made such prudent regulations in the management of his revenue, that he found, from the beginning, it was sufficient to answer all his wants, without the taxes which had been usually laid on the subjects: he therefore suppressed the greatest part of them, and thereby gained the hearts of all his people.

Besides these regulations, which were so advantageous to his subjects, he corrected many errors which had crept in amongst the Mussulmen. He prohibited all games of hazard, the use of wine, and dances. He drove out of his dominions the stage-players, buffoons, and such sort of persons: he put away the elephants, wild beasts, and even the dogs for hunting; in a word, all that had before occasioned great expences in the palace of the Caliphs.

The things which were prohibited by this new order, were for the most part forbidden by the mussulman law, namely the Koran; but religion was long since become no more than an empty name amongst them. Mothadi, who was a very zealous man, and practised all the duties of his religion with the utmost exactness, revived the veneration which every good Mahometan ought to bear

bear to the book of the prophet. He commonly carried it about with him; and when he sat in his tribunal, (as was his custom) to administer justice to his subjects, he always had the Koran in his hand, and judged the several causes according to the decisions contained in that book.

MOTHADI.
Hegyra 255.
Ch. ær. 869.

This prince, who was so just, so rational, and so compassionate to the wretched, must have been filled with indignation, when he heard that the extreme avarice of his predecessor's mother had proved the cause of that Caliph's death. He was struck with horror at the account of the immense riches which that greedy woman had concealed. He caused her to appear before him; and compelled her to confess where she had buried them. She was very unwilling to disclose a secret which so nearly touched her, but she was forced to obey: and having pointed out the place, the treasure already mentioned in the close of the reign of the unfortunate Motaz, was accordingly found in a strong vault under-ground. The prince thought he could not inflict on her a more severe punishment, than to deprive her of her darling riches, which she was so unable to apply to proper uses.

Hegyra 256.
Ch. ær. 870.

He deprives
Cahibah of
the treasure
she had amas-
sed.

This valuable confiscation was a fund almost inexhaustible in the hands of a prince who was always frugal, except in relieving the unfortunate, whose number he had already diminished, by taking off the greatest
part

MOTHADI.
Hegyra 256.
Ch. ær. 870.

part of the taxes. The methods he took to retrench all that favoured of luxury, had also procured him large sums of money ; so that he had sufficient to answer all the purposes of the state, without being obliged to oppress his subjects. As to his personal expences, they were very inconsiderable : in respect to which historians tell us, that the Caliph, after Omar's example, took but a very small sum out of the treasury for his own maintenance.

He proposes
to introduce
strict disci-
pline amongst
the Turkish
troops.

Having thus regulated his court and his state, Mothadi proposed to introduce a strict discipline amongst the Turkish troops ; but it was too late for the making such an attempt, as that corps was become very powerful : he resolved, however, to restrain their insolence, and keep them within due bounds ; but this only drew on him their resentment, and indeed, all his endeavours proved unsuccessful and most unfortunate.

They revolt.

Bankial, one of the principal Turkish officers, having committed a capital crime, the Caliph caused him to be apprehended, and resolved to punish him, to set an example to the rest of that body : but so soon as the Turks heard of the imprisonment of that officer, they rose up in arms, and came in a tumultuous manner to the imperial palace, loudly demanding that the prisoner should be set at liberty.

The Caliph, unmoved at their clamours, boldly refused to satisfy the mutineers ; and

as they began to attack his guard, in order to force their way into the palace, Mothadi, to deprive them of all hopes of releasing Bankial, caused his head to be cut off and thrown down amongst the Turks, who still obstinately continued their attack.

MOTHADI.
Hegyra 256.
Ch. ær. 870.

The sight of the bloody head was so far from intimidating them, that it added to their fury, which was still augmented, when Tagabri, the son of Bankial, put himself at the head of the rebels, to revenge himself on the Caliph : they redoubled their attacks ; and as some troops arrived to reinforce the palace-guard, a set battle ensued before they could force their way : however, at last they gained entrance, and ascended to the Caliph's apartment, still fighting with such as defended the stair-case.

The intrepid Mothadi, preserving his dignity in the midst of this tumult, appeared in person with the Koran hanging on his breast, and his sword in his hand : in this manner he advanced up to the Turks, with such men as were about him, and a fresh action happened, in which the Turks gained the advantage : they slew or wounded all that attempted to defend the Caliph ; and at last easily seized that prince, who was scarce able to make any resistance, on account of two very considerable wounds he had received.

These desperadoes treated the Caliph in a most unworthy manner. They required him, in terms full of insolence, to resign the Caliphate.

MOTHADI.

Hegyra 256.

Ch. ær. 870.

The Caliph is
killed.

His character.

Caliphate. They even cruelly beat him, to force him to surrender that dignity; but Mothadi, constant in the midst of so great adversity, absolutely refused to comply: they therefore continued their outrages on his person, till the arrival of one of Bankial's relations, who put an end to the uproar, by stabbing the Caliph with a dagger, of which he died on the spot.

Such was the end of one of the most virtuous Caliphs that ever sat on the mussulman throne. Historians concur in acknowledging his eminent qualities. He had a noble soul, and an elevated understanding. The great sweetness of his disposition, and his natural love of justice and equity, added a dignity and lustre to his actions, and even to his person, and recalled to the minds of his people the halcyon days of former reigns.

According to El Makin, this prince was low of stature, and of a handsome countenance. His complexion was brown, the fore part of his head bald, and his beard long and thick.

MOTA-

M O T A M E D - B I L L A H. MOTAMED.

The THIRTY-FOURTH CALIPH. Hegyra 256.
Ch. ær. 870.

AFTER the death of Mothadi, the Turks placed on the throne Motamed ebn Motawakel. This election was the last act of power which they executed in the faracenick empire; for the authority they usurped there, was entirely destroyed under the reign of this Caliph. It was however only for a time; for in the sequel they regained their influence, and their chiefs, for the most part, formed Dynasties, which were afterwards established in Chorasan, Khwarezm, Egypt, and even in the Indies.

Motamed was the son of Motawakel, and brother to Montasser and Motaz, his predecessors in the Caliphate. The father of this prince did not intend he should possess the throne; on the contrary, he had formally excluded him from it: but fortune determined otherwise, and he was crowned by the same faction which dethroned his cousin Mothadi.

The affairs of the empire put on a new Motamed's
character. face under the reign of this Caliph; not that he was possessed of any talents to qualify him for governing. "He was a debauchee," says El Makin, "that loved gaming and diversions, for which he neglected the government

MOTAMED.
Hegyra 256.
Ch. ær. 870.

ment of the state." But he was so fortunate, as to place his whole authority in the hands of a prince equally able and prudent, and in all respects well qualified to rule a nation, either in war or in peace.

It was his own brother named Muaffek ; like him also excluded by his father from the succession to the Caliphate. And though he did not attain that dignity, yet he was invested with such absolute power in his brother's life-time, that it might well be said it was he that reigned.

End put to
the authority
of the Turkish
band.

We are not told, what measures he took to lower the insolence of the Turkish band, and by degrees to destroy their authority. Historians only say, that he undertook so difficult a task, and in time performed it : and, in order to prevent that unruly corps from raising any future disturbances in the capital, he formed means to employ them in a foreign war, which he resolved to carry on against the Zinghians, who about two years before had made an inroad into some provinces of the mussulman state, of which they kept possession by force of arms.

Expedition
against the
Zinghians.

Hegyra 257.
Ch. ær. 871.

This people came from Zanguebar, a province on the east coasts of Africa. They were followers of an impostor who had assumed the name of Mahomet, and pretended to be descended from that prophet. As he was master of all the talents necessary for seduction, he soon gained a great number of adherents, whom he caused to take up

arms by virtue of his own authority ; and he then assumed the title of prince of the Zinghians.

MOTAMED.

Hegyra 257.
Ch. ær. 871.

This impostor taking advantage of the intestine divisions which prevailed in the musulman empire, about the 255th year of the Hegyra, got footing in the country of Cufah, and Basorah ; and extending his conquests, he got possession of almost all Arabian Irack. And he so established his power in his newly acquired dominions, that he transmitted them to his posterity.

At the time Motamed ascended the throne, the Zinghians, not contented with their former conquests, strove to encrease the bounds of their territories. And in a short time intelligence arrived, that they had actually entered the frontiers of Persia, and committed terrible ravages there.

Muaffek having taken the necessary measures to preserve the peace of the capital, resolved to march out against that people, and subdue them. To this end he raised a numerous army, in which he incorporated the whole Turkish militia, in order to send them from Samarath, where they had long been the authors of such great troubles.

Hegyra 258.
Ch. ær. 872.

This expedition was not successful : spight of Muaffek's consummate skill in the art of war, he could gain no advantage over those Africans : twice he fought them in a pitched battle, and was as many times defeated ; in-
somuch that he stood in need of all his ex-

MOTAMED.

Hegyra 258.

Ch. ær. 872.

perience to prevent his troops from being totally routed. He was therefore at last obliged to come to an accommodation with them; after which he returned to Samarath, and diligently applied himself to the management of the state.

Hegyra 259.

Ch. ær. 873.

End of the
Dynasty of the
Taherians.

About the same time a revolution happened, which put an end to the Dynasty of the Taherians, who had maintained themselves in Chorasan many years. Mahomet ebn Taher was then the reigning prince of that Dynasty. For some time he kept up the glory of his ancestors, but having afterwards given way to excesses, he totally neglected his affairs.

Rise of the
Dynasty of the
Soffarites.

He had, to his great misfortune, neighbours who were active and vigilant, and who were also extremely desirous of signalizing themselves by feats of arms, and of subduing such countries as they might be able to form into a sovereignty. His most dangerous neighbour was Jacoub ebn Leitz, who was afterwards founder of the Dynasty of the Soffarites.* This prince, who had but just

* The Dynasty of the Soffarites, took its name from the trade which was exercised by Leitz, chief of that family. As he had been a tinker, after he followed the trade of war, he was desirous to preserve a remembrance of his former condition: he therefore took the surname of Soffar, which signifies a workman in brass, or a tinker. From whence his descendants were called Soffarites. They formed a Dynasty, after the extinction of the Taherians, and signalized themselves in Asia, where they conquered the provinces of Chorasan, Tabarestan, and Sejestan. They fixed the seat of their empire in the cities of Merou and Nishabour, and were at last destroyed by the Samanides, as will be made appear in the sequel.

entered upon his grand project, had gained MOTAMED.
possession of the province of Sejestan. Having Hegyra 259.
reflected how easily Chorasan might be con- Ch. ær. 873.
quered, as it was governed by a prince so incapable of making a defence, he resolved to undertake that enterprize.

He therefore marched at the head of his troops, and entered Chorasan. Mahomet, who was then at Nishabour, his capital, was greatly surpris'd at the news : but, instead of putting himself into a proper posture of defence, he only sent Jacoub, one of his chief officers, to enquire by what authority he presumed to enter his dominions with an armed force ? and whether he did so by virtue of a commission under the Caliph's hand and seal ?

Jacoub drew his cymetar, and shewing it to the officer, returned this answer : “ Go tell your master this is my commission ;” and without further delay he marched on to Nishabour, which he took almost as soon as he sat down before it. Mahomet abandoned his capital on the approach of the enemy's army ; but Jacoub sent a body of forces after him, by whom he was so warmly pursued, that he was taken : his whole family were also seized, and their effects confiscated ; and the victor pushing on his conquests, entered Tabarestan, of which he gained possession.

Though the destruction of the Taherian Hegyra 260.
Dynasty was of no great advantage to the Ch. ær. 874.
Caliph, as another had arisen in its stead,

MOTAMED.

Hegyra 260.

Ch. ær. 874.

yet the news of Mahomet's defeat gave great pleasure to the court of Samarath. As to Jacoub, they proposed to deal with him as time and circumstances would permit.

The Caliph quits Samarath, and returns to Bagdat.

They did not therefore take the least step to disturb that prince in his new conquest; and nothing passed that year of greater moment, than the change of the Caliph's place of residence, and the removal of his court. He quitted the city of Samarath, where the Abassians had constantly resided from the time of Motassem who founded it, and went to dwell at Bagdat, which became once more the capital of the mussulman empire.

Hegyra 261.

Ch. ær. 875.

He regulates the succession.

The Caliph had not long been arrived at his new abode, when he took measures to regulate the succession to the throne. He appointed his son Giaffer to be his successor, and directed, that on his son's death, his uncle Muaffek should possess the crown: but this disposition proved ineffectual.

Jacoub revolts from the Caliph.

Whilst the courtiers were yet employed in providing themselves proper conveniencies in Bagdat, they were greatly alarmed by a prince, of whom they had not yet entertained the least fear. It was the same Jacoub, the conqueror of Mohammed, who had taken up arms, and was approaching at the head of his troops.

Hegyra 262.

Ch. ær. 876.

This prince pursued his conquests, made himself master of all Arabian Irak, and maintained himself there in a state of independency; but he had not before presumed
openly

openly to throw off the Caliph's authority. MOTAMED.
 Emboldened by success, he took off the Hegyra 262.
 masque, and appeared in arms against Mo- Ch. ær. 876.
 tamed. The conqueror did not lose time
 in plundering the frontiers; he boldly march-
 ed strait to Bagdat, resolved to attack the so-
 vereign in his capital.

The news of his march threw that city
 into the utmost confusion. The inhabitants,
 who were almost defenceless, thought they
 already saw the enemy in possession of their
 effects, and the whole city in a flame; but
 the brave Muaffek soon delivered them from
 their fears. By his great care and activity,
 a considerable army was raised, and in a very
 short time in a condition to march: he put
 himself at the head of the troops, and went
 forth to face Jacoub.

These two princes, with their armies, be- Muaffek de-
 ing in fight of each other, fought a battle, feats him in a
 and each of them did all that prudence and battle.
 experience could suggest to gain the victory:
 at last, after many onsets given, and sustained
 with the greatest intrepidity, Jacoub's troops
 were broke: the general vainly strove to re-
 store the battle; his troops were put to a
 total rout, and he was forced to take to
 flight.

This advantage was followed by another, Hegyra 263.
 which Muaffek deemed almost equal to a Ch. ær. 877.
 victory: it was the death of Musa, the son of
 Buga, one of the chief officers of the Turkish
 corps. The loss of this officer, added to the

MOTAMED.
Hegyra 263.
Ch. ær. 877.

wife and timely measures which Muaffek had taken to restrain that body, so diminished their power, that they were soon forced entirely to submit to the Caliphs.

By the defeat of so powerful an enemy, and the submission of the seditious Turks, tranquillity was restored to Bagdat, and great joy diffused over the whole court ; however, it was a little abated by the intelligence which arrived from several places almost at the same time.

A report was spread that Jacoub ebn Leitz, in hopes of repairing the loss he sustained in his late defeat, had set on foot another considerable army, and was preparing to march directly to Bagdat, in order to besiege that city ; however, all this great preparation came to nothing. Jacoub indeed began his march, but on the way he was seized with a violent cholick, which carried him off in a few days. He left his dominions to Amrou ebn Leitz his brother, who was the second prince of the Dynasty of the Soffarites. Amrou found means to come to an accommodation with Motamed, and upon such terms, that the Caliph not only pardoned the treason which he and his brother had committed by their usurpations, but also granted and confirmed to Amrou the possession of the country they had usurped by letters patents under his hand and seal.

Ahmet be-
comes sove-
reign of Egypt.

This prince might possibly find it necessary to grant such advantageous conditions to Am-
rou,

rou, that he might be the better enabled to MOTAMED.
 face a powerful enemy who rose up in Egypt, Hegyra 264.
 and who threatened to deprive the Caliph of Ch. ær. 877.
 the sovereignty of that vast province; in which
 design he actually succeeded. This rebel
 was called Ahmet ben Tholon, and was foun-
 der of a Dynasty known in history by the
 name of the Tholonites. The Abassians had
 appointed him governor of Egypt. Having
 for many years governed that province, un-
 der the authority of the sovereigns who em-
 ployed him, he grew weary of dependence,
 and resolved to shake off the yoke, so soon
 as he should be strong enough to attempt it.
 At last he openly declared himself, and so
 well secured the possession of his newly-ac-
 quired dominions, that he transmitted them
 to his posterity.

Whilst the rebels were strengthening them-
 selves in Egypt, news was brought to the
 Caliph's court of the loss they had sustained
 on the side of Greece. Abdallah ebn Rashid,
 governor for the Caliph of a province bor-
 dering on the Grecian dominions, made an
 irruption into the territories of the Greeks,
 slew the inhabitants of most of the towns,
 and carried off their effects. As he was re-
 tiring from a place called Badandurium, the
 inhabitants of Seleucia and some neighbour-
 ing places, joined their forces; and having
 put themselves under the command of men
 skilled in the art of war, they marched in
 quest of the Mussulmen, with a resolution to

The Greeks
 gain an advan-
 tage over the
 Mussulmen.

MOTAMED.

Hegyra 264.

Ch. ær. 877.

charge them, in hopes of recovering the booty. They surpris'd them in a narrow pass, and so surrounded them, that it was presumed not one of them could escape: however, five hundred of the most resolute amongst the Mussulmen, cut their way through the Greeks sword in hand, and rode off full speed; all the rest were slain, except a few of the chief officers, who were taken prisoners, and sent to Constantinople.

As this misfortune was solely owing to the governor's misconduct, he would have been severely punished if he had been in the Caliph's power; but they found he was amongst the number of the prisoners: nothing therefore remained but to deplore the loss of the unhappy Mussulmen, who perished on that occasion.

Hegyra 265.

Ch. ær. 878.

Ahmet takes
many towns.

The revolt of Ahmet ben Tholon, was an affair of much greater consequence. The Caliph thought he inflicted a severe punishment on that rebel, in causing curses to be denounced against him in the publick prayers. Ahmet, who only laughed at a bare ceremony, which in no wise diminished his authority, shewed the court of Bagdat that he was provided of the means of making himself formidable: he took up arms, and attacked many considerable places of the mussulman empire. His first design was to have fallen upon Aleppo, to revenge himself on Siman, governor of that city, who was his personal enemy; but having been in-

I

formed,

formed, that this officer was at Antioch, he MOTAMED.
 went to seek him there, and laid siege to the Hegyra 265.
 place. The inhabitants made a gallant de- Ch. ær. 878.
 fence, but they were forced to yield to su-
 perior strength ; and the vindictive Ahmet,
 having made himself master of the town,
 caused strict search to be made for Siman,
 and so soon as he found the governor, he
 caused him to be put to death. From thence
 he led his victorious troops to Aleppo, which
 he also took, after a long siege ; and pushing
 on his conquests, he seized Damascus, Emessa,
 Hamathan, Kennefrin, and, in short, all the
 places which he found on his way even to
 Taga.

At the very time Ahmet was making Hegyra 266.
 these conquests, and when he had reason to Ch. ær. 879.
 expect the Caliph would be greatly enraged The Caliph
 against him, he, to his great surprize, re- implores his
 ceived a letter from that prince, wherein, assistance
 far from complaining of the injury done against Muaf-
 him by this revolt, and seizing his territo- fek.
 ries, he implored Ahmet's assistance against
 Muaffek. The Caliph repented he had
 given so much power to his brother ; not
 that he abused it, but because all persons
 made their applications to him. He had a
 more numerous and splendid court than his
 sovereign. Motamed's jealousy was excited
 on this account ; he was so mean-spirited
 as to throw himself into the arms of a man
 who was spoiling him of his dominions,
 and to induce him to take up arms against
 his

MOTAMED.
Hegyra 266.
Ch. ær. 879.

his own brother, who had effectually served him on the most trying occasions. It even appears, according to El Makin, that the Caliph not only wrote to Ahmet on that subject, but even held a personal conference with the rebel to engage him the more warmly to espouse his interest.

Ahmet returned such an answer as might have been expected from the most loyal subject. He told the Caliph he was extremely well pleased to meet with an opportunity of serving him ; and he promised to send him speedy assistance : it appears however, that he was in no great haste to perform his promise. He shewed indeed some little inclination to satisfy Motamed ; but it was only by making use of the same expedient, as had been so ineffectually employed in his own case.

Hegyra 267.
Ch. ær. 880.

Ahmet holds
an assembly of
the lords of
Syria and
Egypt on this
account.

He wrote to the governors of such provinces as submitted to his authority, to omit the name of Muaffek in the publick prayers, for he was named next to the Caliph, as being to succeed him in the throne. In a short time Ahmed gave notice to the nobles of Egypt and Syria to be present at a general council, which he appointed to be forthwith held, to deliberate on the means of restoring the Caliph's authority, by depriving Muaffek of the power he had enjoyed ever since the commencement of his brother's reign.

They all appeared at the time and place appointed ; and Ahmet having more fully explained

explained the matter, which was but slightly touched on in his circular letter, they agreed it was right to act against Muaffek, and they promised their assistance whensoever it should be required. MOTAMED.
Hegyra 267.
Ch. ær. 880.

However, this step was strongly opposed by Obar, Ahmet's chancellor, who represented that they had no right to decide the fate of Muaffek, until the Caliph himself had publicly annulled what he had so solemnly done in behalf of that prince. "My lord," said he to Ahmet, "you have laid before us the Caliph's letters, which contain an account of the choice he had made of his brother to be his colleague and successor in the empire. Be pleased now to shew us any letters from that prince, by which he revokes the former."

Ahmet, in a rage, answered, "It is enough that I tell thee the Caliph is not now able to make such a revocation; Muaffek treats him like a prisoner. But I see which party you favour, and I shall prevent your making any further declaration; and shall this moment cause you to be apprehended, and resume all the favours I have so liberally bestowed on you." This menace was executed on the spot; Ahmet dismissed his chancellor, put him in prison, and entirely stripped him of all his effects.

Though many of the council favoured the chancellor's opinion, yet they were so intimidated at the treatment he had met with

on

MOTAMED. on account of his opposition, that they concurred with Ahmet; and it was agreed, that Hegyra 267. Muaffek should be no longer acknowledged Ch. ær. 880. as colleague to Motamed in the Caliphate.

Hegyra 268. It does not appear that these great preparations came to any thing; at least, historians Ch. ær. 881. do not say that Ahmet performed the promise he made to the Caliph.

Nor do we find, on the other hand, that Muaffek paid any great regard to his brother's menaces, or seemed to be daunted at the assistance which Ahmet agreed to give him. He took no other revenge on the latter, than by commanding curses to be denounced against him in the mosques at the time of publick prayers; however, he was resolved to take another kind of vengeance, so soon as he should have carried into execution a design he had been long revolving in his mind.

Muaffek destroys the Zinghians.

He resolved to march out against the Zinghians, in order to recover the honour he had lost in being defeated by their troops. He therefore assembled a numerous army, and putting himself at their head, (with Mothadi his son) he marched out to meet the enemy.

This expedition was more successful than the former. The Zinghians were defeated in the first action; but, as the victor had sustained by much the greatest loss of men, they were soon in a condition of attempting to take their revenge.

In

In the beginning of the next year a battle was fought in which the Zinghians were totally routed. A great number of their troops were killed, and the remainder were either dispersed or taken prisoners; even the prince who commanded them was obliged to betake himself to a precipitate flight: Muaffek so closely pursued him, that he overtook him in the province of Ahwaz, where he had taken shelter with such of his troops as had escaped from the battle. He made an attempt to defend himself; but his resistance only served to occasion the destruction of the remainder of his forces: he was at last made prisoner, and his head was soon cut off and sent to Bagdat. After the death of this chieftain, the remains of the Zinghians dispersed themselves into different provinces; and this party, which till that time had been so formidable, was totally eradicated.

So glorious an expedition had an amazing effect in the whole mahometan empire, and particularly at Bagdat, where all men joined in giving Muaffek due praise. Even the Caliph could not avoid shewing his gratitude for the great obligations he had to him; he publickly made his acknowledgments on that account, by promising him his friendship, and giving him the title of Nasser Lédinillah, that is to say, Protector of the mussulman religion; and he continued to govern under that title till his death.

Muaffek

MOTAMED.
Hegyra 269.
Ch. ær. 882.

MOTAMED.

Hegyra 270.

Ch. ær. 883.

Death of

Ahmet.

Muaffek was desirous of putting the last hand to his renown, by turning his arms against Ahmet, governor of Egypt; but he had scarce begun his march, when he received advice of his death. One would think that this event should not have prevented his departure; for if he had marched into Egypt with his forces, he might easily have put an end to the revolt, by preventing the son of Ahmet from heading the rebels; which event actually happened. But Muaffek seemed to have no more than a personal quarrel with Ahmet; for so soon as he heard of his death, he countermanded the orders he had issued for taking the field.

Ahmet's character.

El Makin relates many passages, which place the character of this rebel in a very advantageous light: however he agrees, that he was cruel and blood-thirsty; though at no other time but when he drew his sword against an enemy. On other occasions he was liberal, affectionate, full of compassion, and very charitable to the poor. It is asserted, that he distributed each month three thousand crowns, and gave one thousand crowns more to such as officiated in the mosques*. He did not confine his bounty to his province alone; he extended it even to the capital of the Caliph's dominions, whither he sent at one time two millions two

* Ahmet caused a magnificent mosque to be erected between Old and New Cairo, which is called to this day, the mosque of Ben Tolon.

hundred thousand gold crowns, part of which was for the poor and infirm, and the residue was bestowed in considerable gifts to the learned, and such as cultivated letters.

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Hegyra 270.

Ch. ær. 883.

But this was a trifle if compared to the expence of his household; for he had seven thousand slaves, seven thousand horses, eight thousand mules, as many camels, and three hundred charging horses for battle; besides this, the daily expence of his table was three thousand crowns; and which is very surprising, notwithstanding these great expences, ten millions of gold were found in his coffers after his death. He was, indeed, possessed of a prodigious revenue; and it is asserted, that the government of Egypt alone, brought him in yearly three hundred millions of gold†.

Ahmet, who was possessed of so great a fortune, was by birth a Turk, and was in his youth a slave at Mamon's court. He afterwards enlisted in the Turkish militia, which was in the service of the Caliphs, and having distinguished himself for his bravery,

Rise of Ahmet.

† The abbot Renaudot, in the history of his patriarchs of Alexandria, asserts, that El Makin, and Herbelot, who followed him, were both mistaken in making the revenue of Egypt amount to so large a sum. He assures us, from approved authors, that this province brought in about four millions three hundred thousand deniers of gold, and not more; which was far from being inconsiderable, more especially as Egypt had been many times ravaged by the Arabians, and as the governors placed there before the days of Ahmet, had enriched themselves by exhausting it. Hist. Patriar. Alex. p. 334.

MOTAMED.
Hegyra 270.
Ch. ær. 883.

he soon attained a high command in that corps. At that time his worth was well known at court; and as he had a great soul, an elevated mind, and was a man of a most polite and engaging behaviour, he was held in the greatest esteem by the whole mussulman empire; and the governments of Egypt and Syria becoming vacant, the Caliph Motaz thought he could not do better than to confer them on so deserving a subject. The revolutions he caused in the sequel, plainly shewed that a more prudent choice might have been made. He left thirty-three male children, and was succeeded by his eldest son called Hamarowiah. El Makin relates, that when Ahmet approached his end, he raised his hands and eyes to heaven, and cried out, “ Lord have mercy on him who hath known no bounds to his power; and shew him in these his last moments that thou wilt have compassion upon him.”

From the decease of this prince till the death of Muaffek, which happened ten years afterwards, nothing of moment passed relating to the reign of Motamed; and this may be attributed to the distemper with which Muaffek was attacked at the very time he was on the point of marching out against Ahmet. He had already felt some few slight fits of the gout, but the malady now became habitual, and left him but short intervals of ease. Being deprived of his wonted activity, and unable to stir abroad, all he could

could now do, was to make use of the few MOTAMED. Hegyra 270. Ch. ær. 883. moments in which he was free from his pains, in giving orders for the well governing of the state; for though the Caliph had shewn the utmost discontent and jealousy, on account of his brother's having assumed the sole management of publick affairs, he had not made the least step towards taking the reins of government into his own hands.

This prince was so wedded to his pleasures, that he had never taken the least pains to instruct himself in the duty of a sovereign: however, he was a man of wit, and had a taste for the belles lettres, for the arts, and particularly for musick, of which he was passionately fond; but he addicted himself to these kinds of study, like a private man who had no other employment; or when he had gone too great a length in his debauches, and not like a monarch who paid a due regard to his duty, and the business of the state, who ought no further to attempt the attaining such accomplishments, than as they may serve to amuse and unbend his mind after his more important occupations.

Parallel between Motamed and Muaffek.

Muaffek was of a very different disposition. He at least equalled his brother in wit, and was endowed with a penetration of mind, sublimity of sentiment, and above all, an extraordinary activity in the administration of publick affairs, to which Motamed was an utter stranger. This made him suffer

MOTAMED.
Hegyra 270.
Ch. ær. 883.

with greater regret the pains of a distemper which forced him to lead a sedentary life.

But as the eye of the sovereign, or his representative, is on some occasions more effectual than orders, so, at such times, his presence was indispensibly necessary; and as he could not sit on horseback, he contrived a kind of chair, or rather portable chamber, in which, placing himself in such a position as was most conducive to his ease, a slave continually rubbed his legs and feet with snow, which he found to be the only means of alleviating his pains. This chair was carried by a certain number of slaves, who were from time to time relieved by others, forty men attending for that purpose.

Abul Faragius, from whom this fact is taken, mentions at the same time a passage, which not only shews the great humanity of Muafleck, but also gives us a high idea of his character. That prince was far from treating his slaves with so much harshness and cruelty, as was usual to the orientals; (and which is far from uncommon, in respect to servants of another kind, amongst nations who pretend to be more polite) he thought his servants were men like himself, and that there was no difference between them but what arose from the caprice of fortune: he was sensible of the trouble he gave them, and sometimes said to them, “I am sure you
must

must be worn out with fatigue: I pity you; MOTAMED.
 but I am so excruciated, that I would rather change conditions with you than remain as I am; for, spight of your fatigue, you enjoy perfect health.” Hegyra 270.
Ch. ær. 883.

The great pains with which this prince was tormented, did not prevent him from continually using his utmost endeavours to promote the quiet, and advance the glory of the state, which he alone could have conducted under so indolent a monarch as the Caliph; and as he foresaw, that in case of his death the state would be so neglected as to occasion great disorders, he early accustomed his son to business, that he might assist him in his life-time, and on his death might be capable of taking in hand the helm of government.

Muaffek having thus passed several years, Hegyra 278.
Ch. ær. 891.
 amidst the hurry of business and the torments of the gout, at last finished his course in the Death of Mu-
 278th year of the Hegyra, and the 891st of affek.
 the Christian æra. The death of this prince was universally lamented in the mussulman empire. His goodness, mildness, his capacity and bravery, had gained him the hearts of all the people. The grandees of the state, who knew him intimately, from the frequent opportunities they had of being about his person, regretted his loss the more; and in order to give the highest proof of regard to his memory, they intreated the Caliph to bestow on Mothaded his son, all

MOTAMED. the honours and prerogatives which the father had so gloriously enjoyed during his lifetime. To this request Motamed willingly consented; but he had soon cause to repent of his compliance.

Mothaded his son obliges the Caliph to declare him his successor.

So soon as the unlimited power of Muffek was transferred to Mothaded his son, that prince resolved to take advantage of the Caliph's weakness, and to open to himself a way to the throne; but as he could not succeed in his design, without first removing Giaffer the son of Motamed, whom the Caliph had some years before appointed to be his successor, he held a conference on that subject with the principal courtiers, who chusing rather to see him possessed of the diadem, than the Caliph's son, whom they disliked equally with the father, they resolved to go in a body to the Caliph, to compel him to annul the appointment of his son, and to nominate Mothaded in his stead.

This affair having been communicated to Motamed, he was greatly amazed at their presumption, in making him an offer equally unkind and disadvantageous both to him and his son; he gave a very cold reception to those that made the proposal: however, as he found, that this design was not the work of an inconsiderable party, but that his whole court, and the principal men of the state, were attached to Mothaded, and desirous of the exclusion of Giaffer, he thought it absolutely necessary to comply with their request,

request, as the only means of preventing MOTAMED. those disturbances which would inevitably have resulted from his refusal.

This extraordinary event happened in the Hegyra 279. beginning of the 279th year of the Ch. ær. 892. Hegyra. There was a general meeting of the nobility and chief officers of the state, in which the Caliph deprived his own son of the right he had to succeed him in the throne, and transferred it to Mothaded.

The universal applause which was shewn Motamed's death. on the taking this step, encreased the Caliph's grief; he was forthwith seized with a fit of melancholy, which soon brought him to the grave. He died of a quinsy, in the fiftieth year of his age, and the twenty-third year of his reign. His corps was carried from Bagdat to Samarath, where it was buried.

According to El Makin, this prince had a handsome countenance, but his complexion was somewhat brown; his head was large, and his face was pitted with the small-pox; his shape was faultless, and his beard long, which, as well as his hair, was beginning to grow grey.

As to his character, it may be well known His character. from what has been said of him in the account of his reign. This prince loved nought but pleasure, and willingly resigned to others the management of the state. Muaffek took advantage of his indolence, and gained so great power as to govern the empire at his

T 3

pleasure.

MOTAMED.
Hegyra 279.
Ch. ær. 892.

pleasure. He was absolute master of the finances; infomuch that he sometimes refused to give the Caliph such fums as he demanded, on pretence he made an improper use of money, when he had it in his power: in fhort, Motamed lavished his income away in trifling amusements, which were held in the highest contempt by fuch a man as Muffek.

El Makin mentions fome verfes which the Caliph made one day, when his brother had denied him fomethings he asked for. The verfes purported as follows: “ Is it not amazing, that a man like me fhould be refused fuch a trifle? My name furrounds the whole world, and my hands are empty.”

Amongft the learned men who dwelt at Bagdat, fince the time literature had been in request there, were two, who diftinguifhed themfelves in the reign of Motamed. The firft, who was called Alcendi, was the fon of Ifaac, governor of Cufah in the reigns of Mahadi and Haroun. He was a perfect mafter of medicine, logick, aftronomy, philofophy, geometry, arithmetick, and mufick: they gave him the firname of The Philofopher, by way of excellence.

The fecond was a Chriftian, named Kofta ebn Luca: he travelled over Greece, and collected a great number of excellent works, which he tranflated into Arabick. An Armenian lord, called Senarib, engaged him in his fervice, and there he paffed the reft of his

his days. They erected a tomb of marble in memory of him, on which they caused the figure of a lyre to be engraved : an honour which was bestowed only on kings and legislators.

MOTHADED.

Hegyra 279.

Ch. ær. 892.

M O T H A D E D - B I L L A H.

The THIRTY-FIFTH CALIPH.

MOthaded ebn Muaaffek was proclaimed Caliph the next day after the death of his uncle Motamed ; and, on his accession to the crown, he shewed he was worthy to wear it. Being brought up by a father, who, without ascending the throne, had absolutely governed the state ; under him he learned the art of reigning, of which he gave signal proofs during the whole course of his Caliphate.

He was sure of the love of the people, from their gratitude for his father's services ; and he encreased it still more by the favours he bestowed on them during the whole course of his reign, and even from the very first steps he took towards the throne. As he was entrusted with the management of the government immediately after his father's death, he soon discovered that the people were over-burthened by the taxes of the preceding year, so that only a small part thereof could be collected ; he therefore generously

MOTHADED. remitted the arrears, and prudently took
 Hegyra 279. such measures, that, for the future, the taxes
 Ch. ær. 892. should be proportionable to the abilities of
 his subjects.

Mothaded
 favours the
 Alians.

This prince was desirous, in the beginning of his reign, to strike a bold stroke in favour of the Alians; but he was dissuaded from it by the reasons urged to the contrary by his chief minister. However, he bestowed on that family all the favours he possibly could, without raising up enemies.

It is said that the inclination which Mothaded entertained for that house, was owing to a dream he had at the time he led a private life during the reign of his uncle. He saw a man, who stretching his hand over the Tigris, drained that river dry, and afterwards brought back the waters to their bed, by withdrawing his hand. The same man asked him if he knew him, and Mothaded answered in the negative: "I am Ali," replied he, "thou seest how great is my power; when, therefore thou shalt ascend the throne, take heed thou dost good to the children of my race." The prince gave his promise; and this was the foundation for his siding with the Alians.

The Caliph is
 dissuaded from
 denouncing
 curses against
 Moawiyah.

In consequence of this promise he also resolved to cause curses to be publickly denounced against Moawiyah the first Caliph of the Ommyans, to revenge the memory of Ali, against whom that prince had also caused maledictions to be pronounced at the
 time

time of publick prayers. Mothaded held a MOTHADED.
Hegyra 279.
Ch. ær. 892. long conference on this subject with Obeidallah ebn Soliman his grand vizir, who gave him very wholsome advice on the matter: he remonstrated to him, that the family of the Ommyians was greatly encreased since the time the fatal blow was given in order to destroy it; that by cursing Moawiyah he would anger all the relations of that prince, and in a word all that belonged to the house of Ommyiah; that it was a great happiness those princes remained quiet, and therefore it would be imprudent to stir up an old quarrel, which might induce them to consider their strength and power, and to endeavour to make use of it, to the great disturbance and detriment of the state. He strongly insisted on the difference between the conduct of the Alians and Ommyians, and entreated the Caliph to consider that the latter had raised no great commotions with a view to reinstate themselves; whereas the Alians had ever been turbulent and restless, and scarce a reign had passed but some one of that family had made attempts to regain the throne; that he ought carefully to avoid giving them any advantage, as they were too much inclined to make an ill use of it; and in short, that he might be assured the Alians and Ommyians equally hated the Abbassians; and that for the future no distinction ought to be made between them.

The

MOTHADED.

Hegyra 279.

Ch. ær. 892.

The Caliph was convinced by these reasons of his vizir; that is to say, he did not put his design against the Ommiyans in execution; however, he thought himself bound to shew some favour to the Alians, in consequence of his promise made in the before-mentioned dream; for the orientals paid a great regard to dreams. There were men amongst them whose sole business it was to interpret their sleeping thoughts; and they did not want business, for the heat of the climate made them subject to dreams and visions. It will appear that the Caliph was more subject to such delusions than any other person; and, notwithstanding his eminent qualifications, it is highly probable he was a little enthusiastick.

Hegyra 280.

Ch. ær. 893.

Mothaded gives a favourable reception to the ambassadors from the Sultan of Egypt.

Some months after Mothaded's accession, ambassadors arrived at his court from Hamarowiah, son of the famous Ahmet ebn Tholon, and his successor in the governments of Egypt and Syria. He followed his father's example, set up as sovereign in those governments, and even assumed the title of Sultan; but as he had condescended to demand an investiture of the Caliph, he was no longer considered as a rebel, but as a sovereign, whom they were unwillingly forced to tolerate. That prince therefore boldly sent an embassy to Mothaded, and offered his daughter, called Ketrolnada, in marriage to the Caliph's eldest son.

The ambassadors met with a favourable reception from Mothaded, who having taken a liking

liking to Ketrolnada, from the description that MOTHADED.
 was given him of her beauty, answered, that Hegyra 280.
 he partly consented to the Sultan's proposal; Ch. ar. 893.
 that he would receive the princess with great
 pleasure at his court, but not as a wife for his
 son, since he chose rather to take her for
 himself. Hamarowiah, delighted with this
 answer, sent and returned the Caliph thanks;
 and from that moment a perfect under-
 standing subsisted between the two princes.
 Ketrolnada being then too young to be mar-
 ried, did not set out for Bagdat till about
 two years after the contract was signed with
 the Caliph.

In that interval Mothaded was forced to He puts an
 take up arms to stop the incursions of a large end to a revolt
 body of Arabians and Curdes, who having of the Ara-
 joined their forces, entered Mesopotamia, bians and
 and plundered all the country about Mossul. Curdes.
 The news of this irruption having been
 brought to Bagdat, the Caliph departed at
 the head of his troops, and marched with
 the utmost expedition towards Mossul, where
 he approached the rebels. By means of
 marches and counter-marches, they for some
 time avoided coming to blows with that
 prince, and made some feints in order to
 prevent it; but Mothaded observed them so
 narrowly, and followed them so closely, that
 at last he came up with them near the river
 Zaban, where they were driven to the ne-
 cessity of conquering or dying. In this
 place a bloody action ensued, which termi-
 nated

MOTHADED. nated greatly in the Caliph's favour. The
 Hegyra 281. rebels were either cut in pieces or drowned
 Ch. ær. 894. in the river, and the few that escaped were
 dispersed on all sides.

He seizes
 Mardin and
 razes it.

After this expedition, Mothaded being displeased with a lord named Hamadam, who seemed to be plotting some treason, and for the execution of which he had caused to be built on his lands a strong citadel called Mardin, came in person to attack the place. On the Caliph's approach Hamadam quitted the citadel, and left his son to defend it. The siege was therefore begun, and many attacks made on the place, which was defended with great bravery. These assaults not succeeding, and the Caliph being desirous to spare his troops, approached the fort in person, and demanded a parley with the son of Hamadam: the affair was concluded at the first conference. Mothaded having promised that young officer safety of life for himself and his garrison, if he would surrender the place, the terms were accepted. The commandant marched out with his troops, and the Caliph forthwith issued orders, that all the furniture and other effects, ammunition, warlike machines, and provisions, should be carried away; and he then caused the citadel to be razed. The destruction of this fort put an end as well to the quarrel as to the Caliph's displeasure; for soon after his return to Bagdat, Hamadam appeared at court, and asking pardon
 for

for his fault, Mothaded gave him a gracious reception ; and that officer and his son took the oath of allegiance to him.

MOTHADED.
Hegyra 282.
Ch. ær. 895.

In a few months after this event, the princes whom the Caliph was to marry, made her entrance into Bagdat with great pomp and splendour. On this occasion, Hamarowiah displayed his immense riches : his daughter was attended by a numerous train of the greatest lords in Syria and Egypt, who carried presents of inestimable value, which were to be given to the Caliph in his name.

Diversions on account of the marriage of Mothaded with Ketrolnada.

Mothaded, on his part, received the princes with the utmost magnificence. From the time of her arrival till the marriage, and even long afterwards, there were daily publick diversions and sumptuous entertainments, which rendered Bagdat a most delightful abode, where all men were partakers of joy and pleasure ; for these entertainments were not confined to the court alone ; the people had their diversions, and there were exhibited, as well in the streets as on the Tygris, spectacles of various kinds, which were concluded by entertainments given to the inhabitants in different parts of the city.

But whilst they were in the midst of their pleasures, news arrived which damped the joy of the whole court, on account of the grief it occasioned to the Caliph and his new bride ; Hamarowiah was no more. They were

Hamarowiah is assassinated.

MOTHADED. were informed he was assassinated at Damascus in the night-time, by one of his servants*. Mothaded, who had entertained a cordial friendship for that prince, was greatly moved at so fatal an event ; and his grief was augmented by the lamentations uttered by the affectionate Ketrolnada, when she was informed of her father's death.

His son procures himself to be proclaimed Sultan.

In a short time they received from that place news almost equally disagreeable. The officers and chief men of Damascus were divided in opinion touching the person to succeed Hamarowiah : some of them named Geisch, the eldest son of that prince, who forthwith possessed himself of the throne, firmly bent to maintain the possession he had taken. Others of the nobility, who were in the interest of Hamarowiah's brother, and would have him for their sovereign, went armed to the palace to attack the new Sultan, and force him to condescend to their will ; but that prince having caused his un-

* The debaucheries of this prince were the cause of his destruction. Having one day caused a young man to be beaten to death, because he would not comply with his infamous desires, his own servants were so shocked at his behaviour, that they resolved to assassinate him in his sleep ; but, in order to execute their design, they were forced to wait till he should leave Egypt, for the thing would not have been practicable in that country. This prince had about him a tame lioness, who lay at his feet whilst he slept, and would not suffer any person to approach her master till he was awake. When he travelled, the lioness remained in Egypt ; and Hamarowiah going to pass some time at Damascus, his servants made use of that opportunity, and one night cut off his head. Renaudot's Hist. Patriar. Alex. p. 334.

cle's head to be cut off, and thrown out of MOTHADED.
 the window amidst the mutineers, who were Hegyra 282.
 then fighting with his guards, they were so Ch. ær. 895.
 struck at the sight that they instantly re-
 tired; however, they did not quit their re-
 solution of deposing the Sultan.

But they could not carry it into execution Hegyra 283.
 till the following year. They returned with Ch. ær. 896.
 an armed force, attacked that prince, killed He is killed,
 him, together with his mother, plundered and Haroun
 the palace, and afterwards retired to a place proclaimed in
 of safety. Haroun, the second son of Ha- his place.
 marowiah, was in a short time proclaimed
 sultan. These revolutions happened in Sy-
 ria within the space of a few months, and
 all the transactions passed in the city of Da-
 mascus, which Hamarowiah had chosen to
 be the capital of his dominions.

So soon as the confusion occasioned by the Haroun re-
 perpetration of these horrid deeds (which ceives the in-
 had happened upon the back of one another) vestiture in
 was a little over, Mothaded resolved to take consideration
 some measures to fix the dependence of the of a tribute.
 Sultan of Egypt in relation to the Caliphs,
 by other means than a bare investiture; in-
 somuch that when Haroun wrote to him to
 demand it, that prince refused to comply till
 he had agreed to pay the Caliph an annual
 duty of a million of gold, over and besides
 five hundred thousand crowns. The Sultan
 being desirous of procuring Mothaded to be
 his friend and protector, readily complied
 with what was required of him; and by
 these

MOTHADED. these means he, in a few years, gained two other considerable governments, which the Caliph added to those he was already possessed of, on payment of an annual sum of four hundred thousand crowns.

The Caliph's
uneasiness
about a vision
he had.

In this year Mothaded was greatly tormented with dreams and visions; the following is one (amongst others) of a pretty singular kind: being retired one day to his apartment to sleep, all the doors flew open, and a phantom appeared before him: this vision was repeated several times, but the phantom always appeared in a different form; at one time like a dervise, at another like a merchant, and again under the likeness of a soldier. The colour and complexion were also changed each time: for the figure was sometimes pale, sometimes florid, and at other times shining with lustre, and again of a dark-brown hue; and its attitudes and paces were also diversified: in short, these repeated apparitions made a great noise in Bagdat, and found full employment for the astrologers, and interpreters of dreams, who were not able to give any satisfactory solution of the matter. Some said that the phantom was one of the genii, or a hobgoblin, called Ginne by the Arabians: others, that it was a devil sent to torment that prince; and others, that it was an angel sent to warn him to repent of his faults. Some persons of sense imagined it to be no more than artifice, and carried on in all proba-

probability by some officer of the court, who MOTHADED.
 had a design in view, the execution of which Hegyra 283.
 might be forwarded by intimidating the Ca- Ch. ær. 896.
 liph: they hinted their suspicions to him;
 and on this occasion he treated some of his
 household very roughly, in hopes of disco-
 vering the imposition. But, after all, these
 visions might well take their rise in an over-
 heated imagination, which might bring be-
 fore the sight objects, on which it was em-
 ployed with too great attention.

Judicial astrology, to which the Arabians Hegyra 284.
 applied themselves with their accustomed Ch. ær. 897.

eagerness, greatly contributed to keep up, Great incli-
 and even give a rise to dreams and visions nation of the
 amongst people of so warm a fancy, who orientals to
 being struck by the predictions of their astro- astrology.
 logers, imagined they really saw all they
 hoped, or all they feared. When a dream
 had made an impression upon them, they
 had immediate recourse to those whose bu-
 siness it was to interpret them; and as their
 interpretations sometimes by chance proved
 true, they gained the greatest esteem and
 credit; and the people endeavoured to im-
 pose on themselves, by not considering, that
 for the most part they were not only mistaken
 in their predictions, but that the very con-
 trary happened to what they had foretold.
 Though the princes were better instructed
 than the people, yet they also gave into this
 ridiculous superstition; and there was not a
 sovereign in the East, who had not at his

MOTHADED.
Hegyra 284.
Ch. ær. 897.

court an astrologer, and interpreter of dreams, who were, if I may be allowed the expression, officers of state.

Falsity of its
predictions.

This very year produced an instance of the falsity of the predictions of judicial astrology. All the eminent men in that science had unanimously foretold, that in the 284th year of the Hegyra, such torrents of rain would fall, that the surface of greater Asia, through the whole extent of the mahometan empire, would be covered with water; and that this would be shortly followed by the overflowing of all the rivers.

Instead of this kind of deluge, there happened so terrible a drought over almost all Asia, that the springs failed, and trees and plants withered and died on the ground; insomuch that publick prayers and fasts were ordered to obtain rain: but notwithstanding this event, so diametrically opposite to what had been foretold with the greatest confidence, astrology lost very little of its credit, and was soon in as great request as it had formerly been.

Hegyra 285.
Ch. ær. 898.

Rise of the
sect of the
Karmathians.

The following year they were forced to take the field, to stop the progress of a sect of enthusiasts, who had alarmed all Arabia: they were called Karmathians, from the name of the founder of their religion and doctrine. This man at first contented himself with propagating his tenets; but they that succeeded him, finding their disciples very numerous, prevailed on them to

take

take up arms, and endeavoured to make conquests. Before I give an account of their exploits, it may not be improper to describe the person and doctrine of the founder of this sect.

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Hegyra 285.
Ch. ær. 898.

Karmath, for so the impostor was called, was born in a village near Cufah, called Hamadan Karmaz; whence he took his name: others say he was so named, because he was little and deformed, according to the signification of the Arabian word Karmath. He published a doctrine tending to the overthrow of Mussulmanism; and as the new preacher made an affected shew of great austerity of life, he gained a great number of disciples, and made an amazing progress in Arabia.

But notwithstanding his pretended austerity, his doctrine was far from being so strict as that of Mahomet; except only in regard to prayer, which he ordained to be made fifty times a-day, whereas the prophet commanded only five prayers a-day: the rest of his tenets may be brought into a narrow compass; for he allegorized all the precepts of the mussulman law. According to his doctrine, even prayer was but a symbol of the obedience which they owed to the Imam or chief of the sect. Fasting was a symbol of the secrecy that ought to be observed, in respect to such as were not of the sect: and fidelity to their chief was typified by the precept against fornication and adultery.

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Hegyra 285.

Ch. ær. 898.

Besides, he permitted his disciples to eat all that was prohibited by the mussulman law, and thereby freed them from many very troublesome things ; for example, from frequent ablutions, which he suppressed, and other legal ceremonies of that kind : in a word, instead of requiring the tenth part of all goods for the use of the poor, he demanded only the fifth, which he directed should be applied to the maintenance of the Imam. This was the title he assumed, and which he ordered his followers to bestow on such as should succeed him in the sovereign power, as well spiritual as temporal.

This sect made its first appearance about the 275th year of the Hegyra ; but for a time it passed almost unnoticed. Karmath preached only in villages, and other places in the neighbourhood of great cities, and deferred making a more publick appearance, till he had gained a sufficient number of disciples. As coadjutors to his mission, he was provided of twelve men, whom he had instructed, and who likewise dispersed themselves in the little towns and other bye-places.

The doctrine of Karmath was forthwith embraced with great zeal by the slaves, and all such as were forced to labour. They took in a literal sense what he told them of the necessity of praying fifty times a-day ; and as this was much more easy than their daily task, they left their work, under pretext of going to prayers. The masters
were

were a long time before they could discover whence the negligence of their slaves proceeded ; but at last a great lord in the country, having observed that his lands were not cultivated, sharply reprimanded the overseer of his labourers : and he having alledged in his justification, that for some time they had quitted their work against his will, on pretence of saying their prayers, the lord asked what could be the cause of so ill-timed a devotion ; and having been informed that a new apostle named Karmath, had principally occasioned this disorder, he sent his servants to apprehend him ; and having confined him in a room in his castle, he put the key under his pillow, well pleased that he had got into his power a man, whose doctrine was calculated to introduce idleness, under colour of piety. He declared to several of his friends, who were that day at his house, that he would himself inflict a due punishment on the new apostle, and that on the next day he would cause his head to be cut off.

The daughter of this nobleman took compassion on Karmath ; she artfully stole the key of the room in which he was confined, and having released the prisoner, she put it again in the place whence she took it, unperceived of her father. The next morning this lord going to cause the new doctor to be executed, he was greatly amazed to

MOTHADED. find no person in the room of which he himself had kept the key.
 Hegyra 285.
 Ch. ær. 898.

The escape of this impostor made a great noise; and by means of his artful management, contributed greatly to the success of his pretended mission: however, he dared no longer to remain in a place where he had run so great a risque; he therefore departed, and went to remote parts with his disciples, where he boasted that his enemies had endeavoured to apprehend him, but that God had been pleased, on this occasion, to give him a manifest proof of his protection, by miraculously freeing him from their hands.

Such was the account he gave of that event to his disciples; he even assured them, that for the future no person would dare to make the least attempt upon him: inasmuch, that this adventure was not only a matter for exulting, but also served considerably to augment the number of his followers. We are not told what kind of end this impostor came to; but it is certain, that after his death the sect was headed by enterprising men, who finding their party very numerous, instructed their disciples in military discipline, began to plunder and lay waste, and even to make conquests.

Hegyra 286.
 Ch. ær. 899.

Thus the Karmathians continued their inroads over great part of Arabia, and at last came and exercised their ravages even in Arabian Irak, being at that time under command

mand of a leader, equally cruel and brave, MOTHADED.
 who gave quarter to no Mussulman. This Hegyra 286.
 general was called Abu Saïd Habah; he had Ch. ær. 899.
 already attained so great a degree of power,
 that he assumed the title of prince of the
 Karmathians. Being as able a man as their
 founder, but a much greater warrior, he
 had accustomed his followers to labour, fa-
 tigue, sobriety, and obedience, which he
 made a proper use of, in order to gain pos-
 session of some territories wherein he pro-
 posed to establish himself, after the manner
 of many other rebels, who by dint of care
 and pains, had procured themselves to be
 acknowledged as sovereigns.

Mothaded having been informed of the The Caliph
 terror and devastations caused by these en- sends forces
 thusiasts in his dominions, sent out against against the
 them a body of troops, under the command Karmathians.
 of Abbas ben Amrou, one of his chief offi-
 cers. This campaign proved unsuccessful
 to the Mussulmen. In vain did Abbas put
 in practice every military artifice to sur-
 prise the Karmathians: he had to do with an ex-
 periented general, and with troops amongst
 whom the strictest discipline had been intro-
 duced, insomuch that nothing was left but
 to come to a regular engagement.

And in a short time a pitched battle was They are de-
 fought, in which the Mussulmen and Kar- feated, and the
 mathians vied with each other, in giving general is
 signal proofs of bravery and intrepidity. taken prisoner.
 Abbas, who at first made not the least doubt

MÖTHADED.
Hegyra 286.
Ch. ær. 899.

of obtaining a victory, was amazed at the obstinate resistance of the Karmathians ; but he was much more so, when he saw his troops give ground upon their attacks : he did all that a great general could do to re-animate his soldiers ; but as he greatly exposed himself, in order to set an example to his men, the enemy made a violent push, broke his main body, and cut in pieces all they met. The general was taken prisoner, with eight or nine hundred men, as well officers as soldiers ; the rest of his army was put to the rout, and pursued to a great distance.

So soon as Abu Saïd was master of the mussulman general, he commanded him to be carried, together with the rest of the prisoners, to a neighbouring place. As Abbas well knew the cruel disposition of the conqueror, he was seized with fear the moment he fell into his hands, and found himself so closely confined. He thought such a kind of treatment was a sinister presage of what would happen to him in the sequel ; and he each moment expected to fall a sacrifice to the cruelty of the Karmathians, when he was informed that Abu Saïd intended to pay him a visit, and was desirous of having a private conference with him.

The general came to the prison, and soon freed Abbas from his fears : for he immediately offered him his life and liberty, on condition,

condition, however, that he should swear to perform what he was about to enjoin him.

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Hegyra 286.

Ch. ær. 899.

Abbas having taken the oath, the Karmathian spoke to him in these terms: “ I require thee to inform the Caliph of what I shall say to thee. I am an inhabitant of the Desert, and accustomed to live on a small matter. I have not taken from thy master any of his forts or cities. The troops he sent out against me have been defeated, because my soldiers are used to labour, and to live hard; his, on the contrary, require all the comforts and conveniencies of life; when they make war in this barren country, where they want all things, they disband, and then I give no quarter to such as fall into my hands. Thou may’st therefore represent to the Caliph, that a war carried on against me will always prove destructive and useless to him; and that, if he is wise, he will leave me unmolested.”

Conference
between Ab-
bas, and Abu
Saïd.

Abbas having promised to give a faithful account to the Caliph of all that had been told him, Abu Saïd set him at liberty. Abbas performed his promise; and, in consequence of the report he made, Mothaded, by the advice of his ministers, resolved to make no further attempt on the Karmathians, whilst they should remain on the ground they had chosen, and in which it was indeed difficult to gain any great advantage over them.

Hegyra 287.

Ch. ær. 900.

For a long time they watched their motions, without taking any other measures to sub-

Hegyra 288.

Ch. ær. 901.

due

MOTHADED.

Hegyra 288.

Ch. ær. 901.

The plague
rages in Ader-
bijan.

due a party which yet was daily acquiring additional strength. During this interval the whole province of Aderbijan was afflicted by the plague, which made a terrible havock. So many died there of that distemper, that the living did not suffice to bury the dead. Their bodies for the most part lay above ground, in the houses and fields, and many even on the road-side, which made the contagion to rage with continual fury. It was computed that in the capital of that province alone, the plague carried off more than fifteen thousand persons.

The Greeks
make an ir-
ruption.

During this period of time, the frontiers were afflicted by another scourge. The Greeks made an irruption into the mahometan provinces. They took and plundered the city of Kaifume, and carried away more than twelve thousand of the inhabitants into slavery. The Grecians did not give them time to march out against them, in order to punish them for the insult; for they just appeared, and marched back again with the utmost expedition.

Hegyra 289.

Ch. ær. 902.

The Karma-
thians conti-
nue to ravage.

The Karmathians having strengthened themselves during the time they remained undisturbed, advanced into the mussulman dominions, and began their ravages anew. In order to be able to plunder a greater extent of country, they divided their forces into several bodies, which carried terror and confusion on all sides; in this manner they penetrated almost to the city of Cufah, and seemed

seemed to threaten a nearer approach. The MOTHADED,
 Caliph immediately issued orders for repair- Hegyra 289.
 ing the fortifications of Basorah, and aug- Ch. ær. 902.
 mented the garrison of that city; and he at
 the same time caused a body of troops to
 march towards the neighbourhood of Cufah.
 He gave the command of these forces to an
 able officer, and recommended it to him to
 take proper advantage of the division which
 Abu Saïd had made of his troops, that he
 might with the more ease defeat him.

This enterprize was more successful than They are de-
 the last which was undertaken against the feated, and
 rebels. Mothaded's general having maturely Abu Saïd is
 weighed their motions, found an opportu- made priso-
 nity of separately engaging one of the bodies,
 which was ravaging the country near Cufah.
 And he attacked it so furiously that the
 enemy could not stand their ground: this
 detachment was cut in pices, and the com-
 mander of it made prisoner. It was Abu
 Saïd himself, that formidable chief, who had
 so long and boldly kept the field.

He was immediately sent to Bagdat under Abu Saïd is
 a strong guard, and brought before the Ca- brought be-
 liph. Though Abu Saïd was a prisoner, and in fore the
 a condition to expect nothing but death, yet Caliph.
 he entered the palace, and appeared before
 the prince with as much boldness and un-
 concern as if he had been at the head of his
 own army. Mothaded was surprised at his
 appearance, but he was much more so at
 the language used by that rebel, in the con-
 ference

MOTHADED. ference held between them. He was not only
 Hegyra 289. bold, but insolent, and examining the rise of
 Ch. ær. 902. the Dynasty of the Abassians, he made it appear that this family had unjustly possessed themselves of the Caliphate, by shewing that the head of it, Abu'l Abbas, (who lived in the days of Abu Beker and Omar) was excluded from the succession to the throne, and consequently, he said, all his descendants were comprized in the exclusion: whence he inferred, that Mothaded had no right to call him to an account for his conduct: and he with the same boldness said to him in express terms; "Why do you trouble yourself about our opinions or actions? mind only what relates to yourself."

He is put to death.

The Caliph, enraged at the insolence of this rebel, put an end to the conference, and sentenced him to death. He was condemned to have his hands and feet cut off, and to be afterwards hanged on the common gibbet. This execution was so far from intimidating the Karmathians, that it seemed to render them more obstinate in their revolt: they chose for their leader an officer named Zacarwiah, a brave and intrepid man, who soon found employment for the Mussulmen, but not till the reign of the next Caliph; for Mothaded died the same year, having lived forty-nine years, of which he had reigned nine. He left three children, who successively possessed the throne. The first was called Moktaphi, the second Moktader, and the third Caher. This

The death of Mothaded.

This Caliph was regretted by the whole musliman empire. He had gained the affections of his subjects, on account of his goodness, his understanding, and his great capacity in the conduct of publick affairs. He was as sparing as possible of the blood of his people, having never made war but when he could by no means avoid it. His officers feared him, for he was naturally hasty, and not easily pleased, but his passion lasted not long, and he soon recovered his usual moderation.

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By the following instance it will appear, that though this Caliph was easily moved to wrath, yet he may be proposed as an example of moderation, which few princes would be capable of. Abdallah ebn Soliman, who was an eye witness, relates the fact in these terms: "A slave being one day near that prince, inadvertently struck him a great blow with the stick whereto the fringe was fastened, which they made use of to drive away the flies that incommoded him. I saw him start, and was not a little moved myself, says Abdallah, for I foresaw the punishment the poor wretch must suffer for his aukward carelessness; but I was much amazed when I heard the Caliph say, with great coolness, surely the fellow is asleep! Upon this I fell at the prince's feet, and cried out: O commander of the faithful, had I not seen, had I not heard it, I should never have believed that a monarch could have carried his moderation so far. Was it fit

MOTHADED. fit I should have acted otherwise? answered
 Hegyra 289. the Caliph, I do not believe he did it de-
 Ch. ær. 902. signedly, and therefore it is excusable; for
 voluntary faults alone merit punishment."

This prince was highly blamed for the great regard he shewed to the Alians: indeed he did them all the service in his power; and when he was gently reprov'd on that account, he was never at a loss for a dream to authorize his conduct. The following instance of his behaviour in that respect, is worthy being related: Mahomet ben Zaid, prince of Mazanderan, was accustomed to send yearly to Mecca the sum of thirty thousand gold crowns, to be distributed amongst such of the house of Ali as were in want. It fell out one year, that this prince having sent that sum to a merchant in Bagdat, to be remitted to the usual place, the officer of justice seized the money: the merchant having preferred his complaint to the Caliph, he issued out an order, that the money should be forthwith restored. The enemies of the Alians, with a view to support the seizure, waited on the Caliph, and endeavoured to get the order revoked; but Mothaded told them he had lately had a dream, in which Ali, appearing to him, predicted, that his three sons should reign after him; and that he had recommended it to him, out of gratitude for the prediction, to be favourable to his race, and by his example to incite his children to grant them their protection. For
 this

this good information, he thought he could do no less than favour the Alians, more especially upon an occasion where charity alone would forbid the depriving them of the means of subsistence. With this answer therefore he dismissed them, and sent the money to Mecca.

El Makin tells us, that Mothaded being in want of a large sum of money, sent for one of the Magi, who was reputed to be the richest merchant in Bagdat. That prince informed him that his treasury would not furnish him with the money necessary for an enterprize he was about to take in hand, and therefore he had recourse to him to supply the deficiency. “If it is in my power, my lord, to advance the sum you want, I shall do it with the greatest readiness,” answered the merchant, “for all I have is at your service.” “But you do not mention a word touching security,” replied the Caliph, “and I cannot conceive how you propose to recover your money.” “My lord,” said the merchant, “you are commander of the faithful; God has thought fit to trust in your hands the lives and fortunes of his servants, and you manage them well, for you are a lover of justice; why then should I hesitate to trust you with my money?” The Caliph was so well pleased with so open and generous a behaviour, that he thanked the merchant, and said to him, “Well! go thy ways, I will not borrow any thing of thee;

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MOTHADED. thee ; but if thou wantest money, come to
Hegyra 289. me, and I will always supply thee out of my
Ch. ær. 902. coffers."

Another author relates an extraordinary adventure, in which a Mussulman named Scheik Kaiat was concerned, and whereby he gained the friendship and esteem of the Caliph, as well as a high character and great respect in Bagdat.

This Mussulman, who was a person of honour and probity, one day passing the streets of Bagdat, heard a woman cry out for help. Scheik having forthwith entered the house, found there a Turk, who was attempting to force a woman : he sharply reprimanded the man, who he returned ill language, and even threatened worse treatment. Scheik not thinking himself able to punish the Turk for his insolence, ascended the minaret of a neighbouring mosque, and called the people to prayers. Though it was not the appointed hour, yet many persons flocked thither ; and Scheik having informed them of the fact, they forthwith went and apprehended the Turk, who was punished on the same day.

The Caliph having been informed of this event, was highly pleased with it. At his desire Scheik was brought before him ; and he ordered that Mussulman always to use the same means to put a stop to any future disorder, till he could apply a remedy, by inflicting due punishment on the offenders.

By

By this means Scheik became so respectable MOTHADED.
 in Bagdat, that not a man dared in his pre- Hegyra 289.
 sence to infringe the rules of decency and Ch. ær. 902.
 good order.

An author named Mohammed ben Ab-
 daluech, says on this head, That a trades-
 man of Bagdat lent a considerable sum of
 money to a lord of the court, who, after
 having used it a long time, at last refused to
 pay it. The tradesman commenced a law-
 suit against him for the debt; the courtier
 defended it for the sake of delay, and the
 creditor having been at a great expence to
 prosecute his suit, without success, resolved
 to sit down with the loss, and more espe-
 cially as his affairs were thereby so greatly
 prejudiced, that he found it necessary to
 quit Bagdat. One of his friends, to whom
 he communicated his grievance, advised him
 to complain to Scheik: the tradesman fol-
 lowed his advice, and success soon attended
 this step. Scheik went to the courtier, and
 talked to him so roundly, that for fear of
 being exposed, he soon paid the tradesman
 his full demand.

The reign of Mothaded was distinguished Learned men
 by the great number of learned men that that were fa-
 flourished under his Caliphate. Thabet ebn mous during
 Korra, and Ahmet ebn Mohammed, were the reign of
 famous amongst others, on account of their Mothaded,
 extensive knowledge.

The former published several works upon
 logick, metaphysicks, and medicine. He

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wrote in Syriac the history of the ancient Sabæans, and gave a very useful and particular account of their customs, the precepts of their religion, and their civil laws. The latter composed several works on the sciences, to which the ancient Arabians applied themselves. The Caliph was thoroughly acquainted with their great discernment and knowledge, and profited by their advice in many affairs of the utmost importance; and as they were very good companions, he not only conversed with them with great freedom and unreserve, but readily admitted them to all his parties of pleasure.

Rise of the
Samanites.

During the Caliphate of this prince, the Dynasty of the Samanites arose, and established itself on the ruins of the Dynasty of the Soffarites. Motamed, who preceded Mothaded, had lived upon good terms with Amrou ebn Leith, who was, as we have said, the second prince of the Dynasty of the Soffarites. He had even done important service to the Caliph, in gaining a victory for him over Mohammed, the son of Zeid, who had been proclaimed Caliph in Chorasan. Amrou defeated him in a battle, and sent him bound to Bagdat.

Out of gratitude for this piece of service, Motamed had always shewn a great regard and esteem for Amrou, and had even declared himself his friend on many occasions: but Mothaded perceiving, that the power of this prince augmented daily, resolved to
force

force from out of his hands, all such parts of his dominions, as his brother and he had usurped from the Caliphs.

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Mothaded brought over to his side Ishmael, the son of Ahmet, and great grandson of Saman*, whence he and his posterity took the name of Samanites. By force of intreaties, and by the assistance of money, Mothaded prevailed on him to take up arms against Amrou. Ishmael, whose courage and ambition were equally great, resolved to take advantage of the Caliph's offer; and as he was already possessed of considerable territories in Tranfoxana, he resolved still more to aggrandize himself at the expence of Amrou, and even of the Caliph, who required his assistance.

Ishmael therefore marched out against Amrou; the latter advanced at the head of his troops to meet his enemy, and each of them was preparing to give signal proofs of bravery and military skill, when by an accident Ishmael was victorious, without being scarce obliged to draw a sword. Amrou's

* Saman was the son of a camel-driver, and for some time followed the same employment; but being a man of courage, he resolved to take up arms. He served his apprenticeship amongst a gang of robbers, of whom he soon became the leader. Assad his son quitted that base course of life, and entered into the service of the Caliphs. He was raised so high, as to be able to give his children a good education, which they made so good an use of, as to attain the chief military commands. They obtained several governments, in which they fixed themselves as absolute sovereigns, and formed a Dynasty, of which Ishmael Samani was the founder.

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horse being very fiery, suddenly took the bit betwixt his teeth, and carried his master to the enemy, who immediately took him, and kept him prisoner in their camp.

Amrou's troops being thus deprived of their general, instantly disbanded, and that great army was totally dispersed. Ishmael having kept Amrou prisoner in his camp during some time †, sent him to Mothaded, who put him to death in prison.

The Caliph amply rewarded Ishmael for the acceptable present he made him; he gave him the title of Padischad, that is to say, Emperor or Monarch, and thus confirmed to that prince and his posterity, prerogatives which daily tended to annihilate the power of the Caliphs.

In the 289th year of the Hegyra, Mothaded being on his death-bed, gave orders

† It is related that Amrou, on the very day he was taken prisoner, being extremely hungry, desired one of the soldiers that guarded him, forthwith to get him something to eat. The soldier took a piece of meat, and put it over the fire in the first utensil that came to hand, (which happened to be one of those kettles they made use of in the Levant, to feed and water their horses) and hastily hung it without much care on a forked stick. Whilst the meat was boiling, and no person there to watch it, a mastiff dog came and thrust his head into the kettle; but finding it too hot, he withdrew his head so violently, that the handle of the vessel fell over his neck, and he ran away with the kettle and the Sultan's dinner. That prince, who saw the action, fell into a violent fit of laughter; and some of his attendants having said that he had no great reason to laugh, considering his present situation, he answered, "I laugh, because my steward complained this morning that three hundred camels were not enough to carry my provisions and kitchen furniture, and now a single dog is enough to bear them away." Hist. Orient. par D'Herbelot.

that his prisoner Amrou should be starved to death; however, the Dynasty of the Soffarites was not ended by the death of that prince: it was continued by Thaher his grandson, who, after the defeat of his grandfather, retired to Sejestan, where he was proclaimed as sovereign and lawful successor of Amrou: but he did not long enjoy that dignity; for the same Ishmael having attacked him in that province, totally defeated his army, and sent him prisoner to the Caliph. This last event happened in the reign of Moktaphi, Mothaded's successor; and by those means Sejestan, and the other provinces appertaining to it, were annexed to the immense territories which Ishmael was before possessed of. Thus the Dynasty of the Soffarites was destroyed, and gave place to that of the Samanites, which was in the sequel totally ruined by the Gaznevites.

M O K T A P H I - B I L L A H.

The THIRTY-SIXTH CALIPH.

THIS prince was at Raccah, when his father died, and was there immediately proclaimed Caliph. In a short time he went to fix his residence at Bagdat, where the ceremony of his proclamation was repeated. Cassem, who was appointed vizir

MOKTAPHI. in the time of the late Caliph, had taken the
 Hegyra 289. precaution of causing the inhabitants to
 Ch. ær. 902. swear allegiance to him, the moment after
 Mothaded's death.

Cassem ren-
 ders Badir
 odious to the
 Caliph, and
 causes his de-
 struction.

According to El Makin, this vizir had formed a design to deprive Moktaphi of the crown, in order to place it on the head of one of that prince's brothers: others assert, that he intended to seize it for himself. He had communicated this design to a Mussulman named Badir, a man greatly respected in Bagdat: but Cassem's scheme not having taken place, he considered that Badir might make an ill use of the confidence reposed in him, and occasion him to lose the Caliph's favour. In order therefore to obviate any unlucky event, Cassem resolved to lay the plot to the charge of him to whom he had communicated it: and going to the Caliph, he accused Badir of the crime of which he himself was guilty.

The Caliph, who entirely relied on the probity of his minister, gave credit to the accusation, and left to him the management of the prosecution against the supposed criminal. Cassem, thus armed with power, used all possible means for the destruction of Badir: he immediately strove to suborn some of his dependents. Badir having been informed of the base means that were used against him, began to provide for his safety, and retired to a strong place which belonged to him. This flight was represented to the
 Caliph

Caliph by Cassem, as a new proof of Badir's MOKTAPHI.
 guilt ; and the prince immediately sent a de- Hegyra 289.
 tachment of troops to besiege the fugitive in Ch. ær. 902.
 his fortress.

Whilst they were preparing to storm the castle, Cassem reflected that Badir might possibly demand a conference with the officer who commanded at the siege, and thereby all the baseness of his conduct might be disclosed. He therefore contrived another method of destroying him : he counterfeited the Caliph's hand-writing, and wrote a letter in the name of his master, in which that prince told Badir, that having caused due enquiry to be made into the matter of which he was accused, he was convinced he was innocent ; and therefore he might come into his presence without fear. The vizir gave the letter to the chancellor, and directed him to send it to Badir, as coming immediately from the Caliph.

The chancellor complied with the vizir's order. The letter was delivered, and the unfortunate Badir, not suspecting the treacherous designs of Cassem, and besides, relying on his innocence, really thought the Caliph was undeceived : he therefore laid down his arms, and set out on his journey to Bagdat ; but stopping a short time at an inn upon the road, some men hired by the vizir fell on him, and cut off his head, which they brought to Cassem. The wretch was so inhuman as to go in person and present it to

MOKTAPHI. the Caliph with great demonstrations of the
 Hegyra 290. joy he felt at the death of a traitor, who
 Ch. ær. 903. strove to deprive him of his crown.

Victory ob-
 tained over
 the Karma-
 thians,

This melancholy event ushered in the reign of Moktaphi: during the sequel of it, they were continually engaged in war against the Karmathians, in which the Mussulmen and rebels gained equal advantages, and sustained equal losses. Zacarwiah, chief of the Karmathians, commenced hostilities by making an irruption into Syria at the head of his forces. He committed great devastations in that province, plundering many of the villages, and other places in the neighbourhood of the chief cities, and putting all to fire and sword. The Caliph forthwith caused a body of troops to march, who came up with those desperadoes, and attacked them so impetuously, that the first onset determined the victory. The Karmathians were broke and totally routed; and the famous Zacarwiah, who had formed such great designs for the advancement of his sect, fell in the action.

They commit
 new ravages.

Hussain, brother to that general, immediately supplied his place, and collecting the broken remains of his troops, he sent them for some time into quarters of refreshment; he also repaired the loss by some new detachments that joined him, and then made ready to go forth against the Mussulmen. This new leader was more successful than his brother; he repulsed the Caliph's troops, and became so formidable, that he made himself

himself master of several towns in Syria before their eyes, and without their being able to prevent it. MOKTAPHI.
Hegyra 290.
Ch. ær. 903.

This news greatly afflicted the Caliph, who finding this extensive province on the point of falling a prey to those rebels, resolved to march in person to its relief. He accordingly departed at the head of one hundred thousand men to seek the Karmathians; but they having received information of the prodigious force they were like to have on their hands, took a resolution to avoid a battle, by endeavouring to retire into strong posts, where they presumed it would be hazardous to attack them.

But they had not time to execute their design; the Caliph's army, which had made forced marches, arrived at the very time they began their retreat, and attacked them on the spot. Hegyra 291.
Ch. ær. 904. The rebels used all the means in their power to avoid an action; but finding they could not possibly continue their retreat, they boldly faced their enemy, and at first fought with amazing resolution: but they were forced to yield to superior strength and numbers. After a very warm dispute, the Karmathians strove to get possession of the ground near the Euphrates, in order to escape; but the way thereto was cut off. They are defeated in a second battle. Hussain their general was made prisoner, with about three hundred of his troops, as well officers as soldiers, who were forthwith sent to Bagdat. Shortly after this signal victory, the Caliph

MOKTAPHI.

Hegyra 291.

Ch. ær. 904.

Caliph arrived at that city, and condemned all the prisoners to death: their hands and feet were first cut off, and they were afterwards beheaded.

Inroad of the
Turks into
Mawaralnahar.

At this time advice was brought to Bagdat of the exploits of the Mussulmen living in the province of Mawaralnahar. The whole country was on a sudden over-run by the Turks who entered it under arms, to the number of seven hundred families. The first surprize occasioned by the arrival of such a multitude being over, the Mussulmen also took up arms, marched out to meet the Turks, surprized them, and made a terrible slaughter of such as stood on their defence; the rest of them took to flight, and were totally dispersed.

Irruption of
the Greeks.

About the same time the Greeks made an incursion, and laid waste part of the mussulman frontiers. They marched in ten different detachments, consisting of ten thousand men each, and dispersed themselves into ten different places, where they committed terrible ravages, and suddenly returned into their own country.

Hegyra 292.

Ch. ær. 905.

End of the
Dynasty of the
Tholonites in
Egypt.

The next year the Dynasty of the Tholonites, who had reigned some time in Egypt and Syria, became extinct. Haroun ebn Chemarawaïd having given the Caliph strong reasons to suspect him, that prince caused Egypt to be attacked both by sea and land. Haroun, who had retired to Mesrah, was besieged in that place, and defended it with great

great valour; but one of the archers of the Caliph's guard, having observed Haroun in a fallacy, let fly an arrow at him with so much strength and skill, that he killed him on the spot. His death put an end to the war; his troops surrendered their arms, and the provinces of Egypt and Syria returned to the immediate obedience of the Caliphs, their lawful sovereigns.

This event caused great joy at the court of Bagdat, which being free from disquietude as to those countries, were more at liberty to employ their forces in those parts where the new rebels had the greatest strength. They were soon forced to arm against the Karmathians, whose party was still formidable. Spight of their last defeat, they appeared again in a few months under a new chief called Zecroune, who penetrated into Arabia, and ravaged even as far as Irak. The Caliph, without delay, sent a body of troops against them; but the rebels laughed at his soldiers, and continued to plunder; and the two armies having faced each other near a place called Cadefia, the Caliph's troops were beat, and forced to retreat, to avoid a total rout.

The Karmathians being elated by this victory, marched into Syria, and plundered many considerable places, such as Bafri, Adragueti, and others; after which they approached Damascus. The governor of that city was then in Egypt, and had left the place

MOKTAPHI.

Hegyra 292.

Ch. ær. 905.

The Karmathians take the field again with fresh troops.

Hegyra 293.

Ch. ær. 906.

MOKTAPHI. place under the command of Salek his lieutenant; who sallied out and boldly attacked the rebels: but this step was attended with very bad success; he was defeated, and thought himself happy in getting back to the town.

The rebels at first proposed to besiege Damascus: but the city being too extensive, and their numbers not sufficient for such an enterprize, they contented themselves with levying heavy contributions. After this Zecroune departed, and marched his army towards Tiberias, where he was attacked by a large body of mussulman troops, commanded by Joseph ebn Ibrahim. That general broke and routed the Karma-thians; and, without giving them time to rally, pursued them even to the Deserts, to a place called Souane, where another hot encounter happened, in which the rebels gained a complete victory. Whether they had found means to recruit their army, or whether despair encreased their courage, they fought furiously, and totally destroyed the mussulman troops; the conquerors plundered their camp, and put to the sword all such as had been taken prisoners.

Hegyra 294. Zecroune, ever thirsty for blood, and
Ch. ær. 907. greedy of pillage, caused his troops to march
They plunder towards Arabia the Desert, by which he
a caravan, and was informed, a caravan would pass in
are defeated by the Caliph's troops. its way to Mecca: he accordingly met them,
cruelly massacred the pilgrims, the mer-
chants,

chants, and even the guides. He spared the MOKTAPHI.
 women's lives, and made them slaves : after Hegyra 294.
 which, he plundered the whole, and was Ch. ær. 907.
 preparing to march on some new enterprize,
 when he was overtaken by the troops of
 Moktaphi, who, on their arrival, immedi-
 ately began to engage them. The Karma-
 thians were disconcerted by this sudden at-
 tack. Zacroune perceiving it, did all that lay
 in his power to inspire them with a resolution
 equal to his own ; but having been stunned
 and disabled by a blow which he received in
 the head, his soldiers lost all courage, and suf-
 fered themselves to be slaughtered by the Mus-
 fulmen. Only a small number of them esca-
 ped. Zecroune was taken, and died five days
 afterwards of the blow he had received. As
 they proposed to make a publick spectacle of
 him at Bagdat, they opened and embalm-
 ed his body, to grace the triumph of the
 victorious troops.

They therefore carried the body into Bag-
 dat, with plumes of feathers on its head ;
 his wife and the other prisoners made a part
 of the procession: and after they had been
 shewed to the people, they were all put to
 death.

This was the last expedition during the Hegyra 295.
 Caliphate of Moktaphi. That prince died Ch. ær. 908.
 the following year, after having reigned Moktaphi's
 about six years. He was greatly esteemed death.
 for his attachment to religion, for his gene-
 rosity, and particularly for his gentle and
 sweet

MOCTADER. sweet disposition. El Makin says, he was
 Hegyra 295. low of stature, of a handsome physiogno-
 Ch. ær. 908. my; that his complexion was a little tanned,
 and his beard very thick.

MOCTADER-BILLAH.

The THIRTY-SEVENTH CALIPH.

Disorders in
 the govern-
 ment, occa-
 sioned by the
 Caliph's
 youth.

MMOCTADER, the son of Mothaded, was proclaimed Caliph after the death of Moktaphi his brother. He was but thirteen years old when he ascended the throne; and by reason of his youth, the great men of the state, the vizirs, and even the women, assumed the absolute direction of affairs; and this abuse was carried so far, that a princess was seen to preside in a court of judicature for the trial of criminals, by the consent of the judges and lawyers, who were well pleased to see such a president sitting in the Caliph's tribunal.

Hegyra 296.
 Ch. ær. 909.

Nothing but disorder and confusion could result from such a government; and therefore murmurs were heard in all parts, above all against the vizir, who was accused of having countenanced the elevation of a child to the Caliphate, that he himself might govern with a more absolute sway. It was judged that these practices would be attended with bad consequences in the sequel; and men asserted, that this young prince being
 early

early accustomed to see the government in Moctader. the hands of others, would never think of Hegyra 296. intermeddling with publick affairs; and that Ch. ær. 909. such men as should be employed in the ministry, would do all in their power to divert him from interposing therein, that they might, without interruption, make an ill use of his name and authority, in order to rule the state according as their interest and pleasure required and directed.

The vizir was apprehensive that these murmurs would degenerate into a sedition, which might probably occasion him to fall a sacrifice, as he alone was blamed for the election of Moctader; he therefore endeavoured to quiet the minds of men, by deposing the young Caliph, and placing in his stead Mohammed, the son of Mothadi: but that prince dying in the mean while, he cast his eyes on one of the sons of Motawakel, who also died at the time they were making preparations for his election; and the vizir himself was soon afterwards assassinated by a prince of the house of Hamadan, named Hossain.

Hossain kills the vizir, and assumes his post.

It is asserted, that this prince was ambitious of the post of vizir, and had incited the people to murmur, and strove to irritate them against that minister, in order to raise him up enemies, and bring him into difficulties. It is said, that the whole design was privately laid in the seraglio, and that Hossain, who was uneasy to find the people

murmur

MOCTADER. murmur only, without proceeding to extremities, resolved himself to remove the obstacles to his advancement, and had therefore determined to slay the vizir.

He causes Abdallah to be proclaimed Caliph.

In a short time Hossain caused Abdallah, the son of Motaz, to be proclaimed Caliph; after which he gained possession of the imperial palace. This change was not effected without causing great tumults; in the midst of which, Moctader trembling for fear of his life, thought himself happy that he could make his escape in disguise. He fled for shelter to the house of one of his most faithful eunuchs called Munas.

Abdallah is killed, and Moctader replaced on the throne.

This trusty servant, without losing time, gathered together and encouraged the officers servants, and many other of the zealous dependants of that young prince, whom he put under arms, and in person led them to the palace, of which they easily made themselves masters, as all things were in a very confused and unsettled condition there; and having seized the new Caliph, they put him to death, by inclosing his head in a bag of quick-lime. By this sudden revolution, Moctader was replaced on the throne, and received anew the homage and compliments of the great men of the state, and of the people.

Hegyra 297.
Ch. ær. 910.

Although it was necessary after so violent a shock to have taken the wisest precautions, both for the safety of the prince's life, and the well-governing of the state, yet affairs

returned

returned to the former channel; that is to Moctader. say, the grandees, the ladies, and the ministers, assumed the supreme power, and continued to manage all publick business during the Caliph's minority. Hegyra 297.
Ch. ær. 919.

Happily for that prince, the enemies of the mussulman empire did not take advantage of the intestine divisions which prevailed in his state, by engaging him in a foreign war, from which he would have found it very difficult to extricate himself with honour.

An instance of this appeared in a revolt in Mesopotamia, which was occasioned by the same Hoffain who had presumed to depose the Caliph. He wisely made his escape from Bagdat, at the time of the revolution, by means whereof Moctader regained the throne; and having wandered about for some time, he fixed his abode in Mesopotamia, where he raised a party, by whose assistance he proposed to throw off the Caliph's authority. Hegyra 303.
Ch. ær. 915.
Hoffain causes
Mesopotamia
to revolt.

Ratek, who was then Moctader's vizir, received orders to go into that province with a body of troops, and to endeavour to reduce the rebel. The vizir marched up to Hoffain the head of a pretty numerous army, provided with a most magnificent field-equipage; but unfortunately Ratek was beat, and the equipages became a prey to the conquerors.

So soon as the news of this defeat reached the court, the eunuch Munas offered to He is betrayed
by his own
troops.

MOCTADER. wipe off the disgrace which had fallen on
 Hegyra 303. the mussulman arms, and undertook to get
 Ch. ær. 915. the better of the rebel. He kept his word,
 and had not even the trouble of drawing a
 sword; for so soon as the enemy's army
 found that Munas had taken upon him
 the command of the mussulman troops, and
 was marching out against Hoffain, that re-
 bel was abandoned by his soldiers at the time
 he was entering Armenia. Munas having
 pursued him, the few troops that remained
 with Hoffain, fell on him and his son, bound
 them both in chains, and in that manner
 brought them to Munas, who led them in
 triumph to Bagdat, mounted on a camel, with
 a ridiculous cap on each of their heads, and
 cloathed in coats of goatskin. In this garb
 they were carried through the streets of Bag-
 dat, and afterwards closely confined in pri-
 son. This successful event caused an uni-
 versal joy; but it afforded a much greater
 pleasure to men of understanding, who being
 fully sensible, how much prudence was want-
 ing in the managers of the state, were full
 of fears, lest the neighbouring monarchs
 should take advantage of their misconduct.

Hegyra 304.
 Ch. ær. 916.

Magnificent
 reception
 given to the
 Grecian am-
 bassadors.

But, far from taking such a step, the
 Greeks, who were the most formidable,
 used extraordinary means to fix the tranquil-
 lity of the two crowns. Ambassadors ar-
 rived at Bagdat from Constantine Porphyro-
 genetis, then emperor of Constantinople,
 under the tuition of the empress Zoe, his
 mother,

mother, who came to compliment the Caliph, and to negotiate a truce, and an exchange of prisoners.

MOCTADER.

Hegyra 304.

Ch. ær. 916.

The great pomp with which they were received, was a manifest proof that their proposals would be accepted. The imperial palace was adorned with the richest furniture; arms of all kinds were placed in view; all the Caliph's guard was drawn up in the great square to the number of fifty thousand men, to whom they publicly gave their pay in purses of gold. In another place appeared four thousand white eunuchs, and three thousand black eunuchs, with seven hundred ushers to guard the gates and avenues to the palace. Within side, and round about it, were put up thirty thousand cloths before the doors, to keep out the wind, of which twelve thousand were of silk, and five hundred of gold brocade, with twelve thousand five hundred pieces of tapestry of excellent workmanship.

In the midst of the great hall, in which they gave audience to the ambassadors, was a tree of massy gold, which had (amongst others) eighteen large principal branches, and thereon were placed birds of gold and silver, which clapped their wings, and warbled out various notes. This tree caused great surprize in the spectators, who could not sufficiently admire so curious and incomprehensible a piece of mechanism.

There were also mock engagements on the water; a great number of boats, painted

MOCTADER.
Hegyra 304.
Ch. ær. 916.

ed and gilt, appeared on the Tygris, which formed squadrons distinguished by their several colours. The crews were neat and fine, and some of them very richly dressed. These boats represented several naval actions, and were managed with the utmost order and dexterity.

These festivals being over, the truce and exchange of prisoners were agreed on ; and at the signing of the treaty, magnificent presents were made to the ambassadors. The vizir and chief men of the state, who had conducted them to their first audience, reconducted them with the same pomp, when they had their audience of leave; and at their departure, the eunuch Munas was commanded to attend them to the frontiers : there that officer paid into their hands one hundred thousand gold crowns, for the ransom of the mussulman captives.

So noble a reception dazzled the ambassadors, and gave them the highest idea of the Caliph's court. The description they gave of it when they returned to Constantinople, made a deep impression upon the emperor's council ; and they were highly pleased at having taken the first steps towards a treaty with a prince, whose power they concluded to be equal with his riches and magnificence.

And without doubt it would have equalled them, had the government been in better hands ; but the sovereign having from his youth been used not to trouble himself

with business, he differed very little in his conduct when he came to riper years. The ladies, the grandees, and the vizirs, were masters of the state ; and the indolent Mochtader, who was not wanting in abilities, thought, that by displaying his grandeur, he fully performed the duty of a sovereign.

MOCTADER.
Hegyra 304.
Ch. ær. 916.

However, he received some uneasiness on account of the Karmathians, who were again in motion ; and he took the trouble of examining into the particulars of that affair. After the death of Zecroune, their last commander, they chose in his stead one of their chief officers called Abu Saïd, which was also the name of their general, who was killed in the reign of Mothaded.

Hegyra 305.
Ch. ær. 917.

The Karmathians fix themselves at Hejar, which they make their capital.

The new leader pushed on his advantages ; he made conquests in Chaldea, Syria, and Mesopotamia, and at last set himself up as sovereign in the city of Hejar, the ancient capital of Arabia Petrea. With this conquest his reign was terminated ; for he was assassinated in that capital by one of his slaves, whilst he was in the bath. This event happened in the 301st year of the Hegyra.

Abu Saïd was succeeded by his eldest son ; but as he was of a very weakly constitution, the council of the Karmathians resolved, that he should surrender the command to Abu Thaher, his younger brother, so soon as the latter should be of due age.

Abu Thaher having attained the age of about nineteen years, did not wait till his

Abu Thaher
pretends to
be inspired.

MOCTADER.
Hegyra 305.
Ch. ær. 917.

brother resigned his authority : he seized it, and gave out that he was inspired by heaven, and that God had revealed to him the most hidden things. By these means he seduced the most ignorant of his sect; and as enthusiasm is a very catching distemper, the Karmathians soon looked on Abu Thaher as a prophet : and at last he was proclaimed as sole prince and chief of that sect.

Hegyra 311.
Ch. ær. 923.

He gained an implicit obedience from them, by often telling them of the future grandeur of the nation, and of the great conquests which heaven had appointed him to make. Each Karmathian offered to risque his life and fortune in the service of the new prince and prophet. These offers were very agreeable to Abu Thaher, who did not think fit to let them cool ; he marched out at the head of those determined men, and laid siege to Basorah. This enterprize proved successful ; the city was taken by assault : he caused almost all the inhabitants to be massacred ; and then gave up the place to be pillaged for fifteen days.

He seizes Basorah.

Hegyra 312.
Ch. ær. 924.

He plunders a caravan.

Elated by this success, Abu Thaher entered on new designs. Amongst others, he attacked a caravan returning from Mecca. It was numerous, and consisted of many persons of note, who were conducted by a Mussulman of distinction named Abdallah. The Karmathian falling with his troops on the caravan, slew part of them, dispersed the rest, and seized all that the pilgrims

grims

grims were possessed of. Abdallah their chief having been taken prisoner, Thaher proposed to make use of his captive, in order to come to some terms with the court of Bagdat. With that view he took great care of Abdallah, and treated him with the utmost civility. He also sent the chief men of the sect to visit him, and did all that lay in his power to gain his friendship.

MOCTADER.
Hegyra 312.
Ch. ær. 924.

When Abu Thaher thought he had gained the good will of his prisoner, he imparted to him his design of making peace with the Caliph : and desired he would befriend him in that matter with Moctader, to whom he proposed to send an embassy with proposals for an accommodation. He added that as a proof of the sincerity of his intentions, he that moment would set him at liberty, and begged of him to make use of it, in preparing the court of Bagdat to lend a favourable ear to the terms he shortly intended to offer.

Abdallah was dismissed on the spot ; and when they had given him time enough to mollify the Caliph, ambassadors were sent to Bagdat with costly presents for Moctader. That prince gave a gracious reception to the ambassadors, and treated them and all their train with as much affability and politeness, as if they had been sent to him by a real sovereign.

He proposes terms to the Caliph, which are rejected.

This kind treatment gave the envoy hopes that Abu Thaher's terms would be accepted ;

MOCTADER. however they were all totally rejected. And
 Hegyra 312. indeed his demands were a little extrava-
 Ch. ær. 924. gant. The Karmathians required, that the
 city of Basorah should be absolutely ceded
 to him; and that they should add to it the
 province of Ahwaz, to be erected into a
 principality for him and his descendants.

As he was perfectly well acquainted with
 the situation of affairs at the court of Bagdat,
 he concluded that a government so weak
 would make no difficulty to purchase a peace
 at that price: but the Caliph thought his
 terms exorbitant; and without giving any
 other answer, absolutely refused to accept
 them.

Abu Thaher was greatly surprised when
 his embassadors, on their return, related to
 him the Caliph's answer. Insensibly his sur-
 prize was turned into rage; he resolved to
 take revenge for the slight that had been put
 upon his terms, which were indeed highly
 advantageous to him, but would at the same
 time have restored quiet to the empire.
 He therefore retook the field the following
 year, and made new conquests in the mussul-
 man territories. He attacked and seized many
 towns, and in particular made terrible ha-
 vock in the country round about Cufah.
 He besieged that city, took it by assault,
 gave it up to be plundered for several days,
 and slew the greatest part of the inhabitants;
 such of them as escaped the fury of the con-
 querors, were reduced to a state of slavery.

It

Hegyra 313.
 Ch. ær. 925.

Abu Thaher
 seizes Cufah.

It is not said that any steps were then taken at the court of Bagdat, to curb the insolence of this rebel. He therefore continued his ravages without interruption, till about the 315th year of the Hegyra, when the Caliph sent out a body of troops against him, under the command of one of his officers named Joseph. The Karmathians, encouraged by their success, despised the Caliph's army; and Joseph having risked an action, his troops were defeated, and for the most part put to the sword, and he himself taken prisoner.

MOCTADER.
Hegyra 315.
Ch. ær. 927.

He defeats the
Caliph's
troops.

This victory was a fresh incitement to Abu Thaher to persevere; however, it seems his intention was rather to intimidate the Caliph, than to make conquests; for having formed a design of approaching Bagdat, he only took with him a flying camp of four hundred horse, with which he threw the whole neighbourhood, and even the capital, into the greatest consternation. Moctader caused ten thousand men to march out, and to endeavour to carry off the detachment; but the Caliph's troops returned without having made the least attempt.

He makes in-
cursions to the
neighbour-
hood of Bag-
dat.

Abu Thaher having returned with the same expedition as he came, appeared again, and made a shew of attacking Anbar, a city of Arabian Irak, twenty leagues from Bagdat; but it was no more than a feint, and he again marched back. The court was so terrified at this new proceeding, that so soon as they

MOCTADER. they heard of the Karmathians departure,
 Hegyra 315. the Caliph, the ministers, and the ladies,
 Ch. ær. 927. who had a share in the government, returned thanks to God for the happy event, and distributed fifty thousand crowns in alms to the poor. Abu Thaher was not idle; he soon appeared and alarmed them in other parts, and returned almost as suddenly. The poor were likewise benefited by this event; for they received on this occasion alms to the amount of one hundred thousand drachmas.

Hegyra 316. Thus the Karmathian spent his time in
 Ch. ær. 928. making incursions, in order to exhaust the Caliph's treasury in alms-giving: he was not indeed obliged to think of making a defence, for they did not cause any troops to march out against him till a long time was passed. He suspended his incursions to give rest to his troops; and made use of that juncture to go to Hejar, where he built a magnificent palace.

Hegyra 317. Whilst the Caliph entertained hopes of
 Ch. ær. 929. enjoying a little quiet at Bagdat, in consequence of the retreat of the rebels, a revolution of a most extraordinary kind happened at court. Moctader was deposed from the Caliphate. Caher, his brother, was placed on the throne, and afterwards removed, to give way to Moctader. These transactions all passed in a very short time. The following is the account of that singular event, given us by El Makin.

Moctader is
 deposed by
 Munas.

The eunuch Munas, who was so firmly MOCTADER. attached to his prince, that he had procured Hegyra 317. him to be replaced on the throne at the time Ch. ær. 929. an attempt was made to deprive him of the crown, either really had, or thought he had, great reason to be dissatisfied with the conduct of the Caliph, who, as Munas declared, had formed a design of arresting him. Of this he complained to his friends; and the prince being informed of his suspicions, was pleased to strive to undeceive him, as to the information which he pretended had been given him.

Munas doubting of the Caliph's sincerity, and thinking himself in danger so long as that prince remained on the throne, resolved to deprive him of the crown, and to place it on the head of Caher; which he hoped to accomplish with the greater facility, as he was in the highest credit with the soldiery. He therefore went one day to the imperial palace with a body of horse, and having forced his way into the Caliph's apartment, he seized that prince, and the princess his mother, and sent them both to his own house. On leaving the palace he told the troops, that all it contained was their own, and that they might plunder without fear. The soldiers were far from being backward in taking advantage of the permission, and in a very short time they carried off from the palace all the gold and silver they could lay their hands on.

Munas

MOCTADER. Munas having thus got Moctader into his power, compelled him to surrender the Caliphate ; and that prince did so on the spot, in presence of many witnesses : they then brought forth Caher, his brother, whom Munas caused to be proclaimed Caliph by the soldiery ; and couriers were immediately dispatched to all the provinces, to inform the people of that event.

The soldiery depose Caher, and replace Moctader on the throne.

But on the next day another revolution happened, which restored things to their former state. The troops demanded their pay : but affairs being in such a condition, that the new Caliph was unable to satisfy their demands, they were intreated to have a little patience. Enraged at the delay, they entered the palace in a tumultuous manner, killed an officer called Baruc, who had lately been appointed captain of the guard by Caher, and began to cry out Moctader ! Moctader ! At this cry, part of the soldiers went to the house of Munas, took out Moctader, and brought him in triumph to the palace. Those who began the tumult, seeing him appear, pulled down Caher from the throne, placed Moctader thereon, and instantly brought his brother before him, to know how he should be dealt with. They, for the most part, required he should be put to death.

But at sight of him, the Caliph, being himself greatly disconcerted at these strange events, gave him his hand, saying to him,
 “ Come

“Come near, brother, you are not guilty of what has passed; be comforted,” added he, embracing him, “I swear that I will never do you the least ill turn.” Caher only returned this short answer: “O commander of the faithful, God knows my heart.” As to Munas, he quitted Bagdat the instant that Moctader reascended the throne; but he kept up a correspondence there, which soon caused a new revolution.

The Karmathians, who had remained quiet during these commotions, soon took the field again. They marched from the province of Baharein, where Abu Thaher had fixed their quarters, and took the road to Mecca, under the conduct of that prince. Their march was but one continued ravage, which became more furious as they approached the neighbourhood of that city: they afterwards laid siege to Mecca, carried it by storm, and slew more than thirty thousand persons. But what must have given infinitely greater concern to all true Mussulmen, was their profanation of the temple of the Caabah: they took away the famous black stone, which, ever since the days of Mahomet, had been held in the highest veneration by the Mussulmen. They filled with dead bodies the well of Zemzem, so famous, and held in so great reverence by the Arabians: in short, they did all in their power to insult the whole nation, and the Caliph in particular, who, as the head of religion,

MOCTADER.
Hegyra 317.
Ch. ær. 929.

Hegyra 318.
Ch. ær. 930.

The Karma-
thians plunder
Mecca.

MOCTADER.
Hegyra 318.
Ch. ær. 930.

ligion, must have been affected in a most lively manner with the indignities committed in a city, which had been the nursery of Musulmanism.

Hegyra 319.
Ch. ær. 931.

They make
incursions to
the neighbour-
hood of Bag-
dat.

Having thus pillaged Mecca, Abu Thaher marched towards Bagdat; and leaving the main body of his troops in a place at a considerable distance, he went with about one thousand men to skirmish in the neighbourhood of that capital; after which he passed the Tygris, and advanced so near, that it was high time to think of stopping his progress. The Caliph appointed to the command on that occasion, one of his captains named Abu Sage, who having assembled about thirty thousand men, marched out and encamped at some distance from the post which Thaher occupied. He sent one of his officers to reconnoitre the rebel's forces, and finding that they amounted to no more than one thousand men, he wrote to the Caliph, and with great confidence assured him that he would soon deliver up Thaher to him as a prisoner, to be dealt with according to his pleasure. Moctader being delighted with this promise, and being always apprehensive that the enemy would elude him, wrote back on the spot, and commanded his general forthwith to break down the bridge on the Tygris, that he might not make his escape.

Abu Sage de-
pises the ene-
my, which
causes the de-
struction of
the Caliph's
troops.

Abu Sage, relying on his superior numbers, did not deign at first to draw a sword against the Karmathian; and as he had formerly

merly been acquainted with him, he sent an officer to inform him, that out of regard to the friendship that had once subsisted between them, he would now advise him to surrender, or to take the most speedy means for making his escape.

MOCTADER.
Hegyra 319.
Ch. ær. 931.

Abu Thaher, who was one of the most unlikely men in the world to relish such advice, asked the number of Abu Sage's troops? The officer answering, that he had thirty thousand men. "Tell him from me," replied the Karmathian, "that if he has thirty thousand men, he has not three such fellows as mine are." Thereupon he caused three of his soldiers to be called, and commanded the first to stab himself, and he obeyed without the least hesitation: he ordered the second to throw himself into the Tygris, and he forthwith precipitated himself into the river: and the third, he commanded to ascend a lofty tower, and throw himself down to the bottom, and he immediately did so. Then addressing himself to the mussulman officer, who had been a witness of what had passed, "Do you think," said he, "that a prince who has such soldiers, need fear the great number of his enemies? For your part, I will give you quarter; because you do no more than your master has commanded: but depend upon it, you shall soon see your general chained up amongst my dogs."

The mussulman officer being returned, and having given an account of what he had
seen

MOCTADER.
Hegyra 319.
Ch. ær. 931.

seen and heard, Abu Sage treated the speech of the Karmathian as a ridiculous bravado, for which he would soon give him due correction ; and he deferred taking the necessary steps to surround him (as he had promised the Caliph) till the next day ; but the Karmathian did not give him an opportunity. As he was persuaded that the Mussulmen, depending on their superiority of numbers, would be off their guard, he resolved to be before-hand with them, and to attack them as soon as possible in their camp : and therefore, on the envoy's departure, Abu Thaher sent out some persons to reconnoitre the posture of the enemy ; and having considered the account they gave him of the mussulman encampment, he issued orders for an attack the following night.

The Karmathians, assisted by the darkness, having approached undiscovered, fell on a sudden upon Abu Sage's camp with such fury, that great part of his troops were slain, before it was well known that the enemy was in the camp ; and the slaughter continued for a long time. This terrible alarm so intimidated the Mussulmen, that they could not be prevailed on to make use of their weapons in their own defence. A great number of them took to flight ; and some of the fugitives, not knowing whither they went, (so dark was the night) fell in amongst the Karmathians, who knocked them on the head. Abu Sage assembled
round

round about him a number of his bravest soldiers; but their resistance was ineffectual; the Karmathians cut them in pieces, and at last seized Abu Sage himself, whom they brought to their general. Abu Thaher dealt with him as he had threatened to do, when the mussulman officer came to persuade him to surrender; he chained him up amongst his dogs.

MOCTADER.
Hegyra 319.
Ch. ær. 931.

Abu Thaher contenting himself with having gained so considerable an advantage in the very fight of the court, retired with his prisoners and the booty he had taken; and by his departure tranquillity was restored to the city of Bagdat.

But a storm soon arose, which brought about a revolution. Although Moctader had promised Caher that he would bury in oblivion the injury he had done him in depriving him of the Caliphate, yet he caused him to be seized and put in prison. Kon-demir, from whom this fact is taken, adds, that the Caliph intended to put him to death. It is probable that Caher did not entertain a due sense of his brother's clemency, but had been guilty of some new crime; and it appears, that from the time of the insurrection by which Caher was placed on the throne, he kept up his connections with Munas, and found means, though a prisoner, to carry on a correspondence with him, by the assistance of one of that eunuch's brothers, who lived at Bagdat: for as to Munas, he had

The Caliph
orders Caher
to be apprehended.

MOCTADER.
Hegyra 319.
Ch. ær. 931.

kept himself at a distance ever since the injury he had done to Moctader, by raising his brother to the throne.

Munas, who was doubtless weary of being thus condemned to banishment, of which he could expect no end so long as Moctader lived, agreed with Caher to destroy that prince. The eunuch imparted the secret to a barbarian, a bold intrepid man, and ready to undertake any thing for money; so that, in consideration of a large sum which was promised him, he engaged to kill the Caliph. The assassin had a qualification which recommended him to Moctader: he was the best horseman in the country; and as the Caliph took great delight in tilts and tournaments, he often entertained his court with that diversion; at which the barbarian was always present, and gained great admiration for his skill and agility.

He is assassinated.

One day when a tournament was held by order of the Caliph in the principal square of Bagdat, the barbarian appeared, and pleased the whole assembly, by the graceful manner in which he managed his horse, and by the dexterity he shewed in running at the head. The Caliph caused him to repeat it several times; and as the guard, which surrounded that prince, prevented him from seeing all that passed in the square, he ordered them to fall back into a line on each side of him, that his view might not be interrupted: the barbarian thus finding
the

the way open to the prince, galloped to-wards him, and thrusting a lance into his breast, rode off full speed.

MOCTADER.

Hegyra 319.

Ch. ær. 931.

His design was to have gone instantly to the prison where Caher was confined, and to have imparted the event to persons expressly provided, who only waited his arrival to force open the prison-doors; but he did not go so far: in crossing the market-place, his horse, who was startish, took fright on seeing an ass loaded with brush faggots, which dragged on the ground. The noise occasioned the horse to rear up against a butcher's stall, and the assassin was hung by the throat on one of the hooks, his horse at the same time running away from under him.

The assassin's death.

The Caliph's attendants, who pursued the murderer, soon came there, and finding him thus hanging, and almost dead, they prepared to make him feel a more exquisite punishment for his crime, whilst he was yet alive. They took the load of faggots which were at hand, put them under the barbarian, set them on fire, and burned him.

As to the Caliph, he fell the moment he received the wound, and died in a short time. He was about thirty-eight years old, and had reigned near twenty-five years. He left three children, Radi, Moktaphi, and Mothi, who all reigned after Caher their uncle.

MOCTADER.

Hegyra 319.
Ch. ær. 931.The manner
in which El
Makin relates
the Caliph's
death.

The death of Moctader is related in a different manner by other authors. El Makin says, that Munas having been informed that Moctader had formed a resolution of taking him by force from his asylum, and putting him in prison, had collected a body of troops, and came and sat down before Bagdat: that the Caliph put himself at the head of his own forces, and marched out to attack him; and that a bloody action ensued, in the heat of which Moctader having been taken by a body of barbarians, was killed by one of them, who cut off his head and presented it to Munas.

Abul Faragius
differs in his
account of
this, and some
other circum-
stances of his
reign.

Abul Faragius indeed agrees, that Munas came with forces to attack Bagdat; but he gives us to understand, that he did not mean to bend his force against the Caliph; and that his design was only to take revenge of the vizir, with whom he was highly offended. He adds, that at the time Munas laid siege to Bagdat, the Caliph was an utter stranger both to his revolt and his proceedings; and that being under the greatest surprize to be attacked at a time he was so unprepared to sustain a siege, his ministers advised him to go out to meet his enemy, in such a manner as might either mollify him, or prevail on his troops to desert him; and the best expedient they could contrive was, that the Caliph attended by the doctors of the law, each having the Koran open on his breast, should appear

appear before the besiegers, on which they MOCTADER.
 doubted not but the greatest part of the re- Hegyra 319.
 bels would quit Munas, and come to the Ch. ær. 93 L.
 Caliph's assistance.

This advice was followed, but without success. The Caliph went out of Bagdat, and would have approached the enemy's camp; but, instead of seeing the besiegers come to join him, he was abandoned even by those that had accompanied him: he therefore resolved to return into the city, when he was met by some soldiers. As they appeared to have no good design, Moctader said to them, "Remember I am the Caliph." "We know thee well, base man," replied they, and one of them having given him a blow which felled him, the others put an end to his life. They then stripped him, cut off his head, and left the body naked in the midst of a field, where it was found by a labourer, who dug a grave and buried it on the spot. The head having been brought to Munas, it is said he was filled with grief to find, that his vengeance, which was designed only against the vizir, had caused the destruction of the Caliph. This is the account given by Abul Faragius.

The same author, speaking of the character of this prince, says, That though he was no more than thirteen years of age when he ascended the throne, he shewed he had no mind to be governed; that all Bagdat talked of the spirit he shewed; and that the vizir

MOCTADER.
Hegyra 319.
Ch. ær. 931.

suspecting the young prince of a design to take away his post, formed a project to deprive him of the crown, and to place it on the head of Caher; but that the minister changed his opinion, when he found the Caliph was better inclined towards him. Abul Faragius adds, that the vizir was shortly afterwards assassinated by Hoffain ebn Hamadan, who having been concerned with the vizir in the conspiracy against the Caliph, was apprehensive that minister would one day make the prince his enemy. The same author continuing his relation, says, That Hoffain persisting in the design he had formed with the vizir, found means to drive Moctader from the throne, of which he had just taken possession; that to this end he caused Motassem to be proclaimed, and gave him the surname of Moctadi-Billah; that he afterwards caused it to be signified to Moctader, that he must quit the imperial palace; that the young prince desired he would wait till the next day, which having been granted, he took advantage of the respite, and prepared for his defence; that Hoffain coming on the morrow with the new Caliph to take possession of the palace, found all Moctader's attendants under arms, who refused him entrance: that they came to blows, the action was bloody, and lasted the whole day; and that at length Moctader's party prevailed, and Hoffain escaped into Mesopotamia. Motassem, who was thus illegally made Caliph,

and

and who had appointed a vizir, fled into the MOCTADER.
Desert with his minister; and this is the ac- Hegyra 319.
count given by Abul Faragius of the first Ch. ær. 931.
deposing of Moctader.

In a short time that prince, who is represented by some authors, and particularly by El Makin, as a man of the utmost indolence, soon shewed the contrary, according to Abul Faragius. A sedition arose in Bagdat, which was probably occasioned by the secret practices of Hoffain and his party. The citizens and merchants were robbed or assassinated in their own houses; and the mutineers threatened to plunder the whole city. Moctader in person headed his troops, put part of the rebels to the sword, and such as they seized were soon afterwards publickly executed.

In writing the life of Moctader I have followed the opinion of El Makin, which seemed to me the more probable, as Abul Faragius himself, who has described that prince, as so active and valorous in his earliest youth, has not through his whole reign furnished us with another proof in support of that assertion: whereas, according to the picture drawn of him by El Makin, he was indolent at the beginning, and continued so to be until his death.

During the reign of this prince, a famous Story of Hoffain Hallage.
man, named Hoffain Hallage, was executed. He had for a long time gained great respect from the people in the several parts

MOCTADER.

Hegyra 319.

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where he had inhabited : he was supposed to have the gift of revelation, and it was reported that he could discover the most secret thoughts. He led a very austere life ; and it is even asserted, that during a long residence in Arabia, he lived a whole year in a cave, bare-headed, and unprovided of rayment suitable to the different seasons : he fasted often in the year, and for many days together took no food ; after which he broke his fast, only by eating three mouthful of bread and drinking a little water.

His discourse was suitable to his wise conduct ; he preached up the strictest morality, and above all spoke of the love of God with so great zeal and enthusiasm, as might persuade the hearers he was thoroughly affected by it. “ Seventy years have passed,” would he often say, “ since the divine flame was first lighted up in my entrails ; they would have been entirely consumed, but for a spark of him who is sovereign truth, which gave a new life to my ashes. He alone, who is inflamed by the same fire, can tell how great is my burning.” After which he cried out, “ Oh ! divine love, fly to my succour, that we may be inseparably united ; thou alone, O Lord, knowest the condition of a heart which burneth with the love of thee.”

He often mixed with his discourse many things which have induced some authors to believe he was a Christian. For example, he often cried out in a transport, “ Be he
for

for ever praised, who manifested to us his MOCTADER. humanity, concealing at the same time his Hegyra 319. divinity, which pervades all things, in- Ch. æt. 931. much that he condescended to appear amongst us, eating and drinking like us." And at the time sentence of death was passed on him, he only said, "He that invites me to the banquet, does me no wrong in making me drink of the cup which he himself drank of before his death." This was the very language of the martyrs.

But the same enthusiast, who was suspected of being a Christian, observed the mussulman law with the greatest punctuality, and performed the pilgrimage to Mecca, as a follower of Mahomet: and it was even on account of this pilgrimage, that a dispute arose which brought him to a shameful end.

This catastrophe happened at Bagdat, where he came to reside about the 309th year of the Hegyra, after having dwelt a long time at Mecca. His austerity, his piety, and the religious strain which abounded in his discourse, all contributed to gain him a great number of followers, but at the same time to raise up against him many enemies, especially amongst the doctors of the mussulman law, who resolved to destroy him. They therefore diligently sought for the means of accusing him; and as they could find no fault with his life, they confined themselves to his doctrine. Their first attempts to dis-

cover

MOCTADER.
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COVER some error therein was fruitless; he boldly stood the trial, and fully refuted all their arguments; but the doctors having been informed he had taught his disciples that they might dispense with themselves from performing the journey to Mecca, his adversaries stuck to that point, and thereon he was condemned.

He was interrogated therefore, whether a man might decline going a pilgrimage to Mecca? He answered (agreeable to what he had already advanced in his writings) “That he might absolutely do so, but on the following conditions: First, He must set apart a room of his house, which must be kept very neat and clean, but without the least furniture. Secondly, That he should permit no person to enter therein. Thirdly, That all the accustomed ceremonies were to be performed, and the usual prayers recited there. Fourthly, That after having observed all the duties prescribed by the law, as an equivalent for the trouble, fatigue and hazard of the journey, which was dispensed with, he should assemble together thirty orphans in the same place, who should be cloathed and fed during thirty days. He was besides personally to wait on them at table, and upon dismissing them, give to each thirty drachmas.”

At this rate, the dispensation for the voyage to Mecca should seem to have been set at a high price; and indeed, what the prisoner

prisoner substituted in the place of that pilgrimage, might have seemed very reasonable to a Mussulman : but yet it was the cause of his condemnation. The Cadi, or chief magistrate, judged him worthy of death, and the rest of the assembly joined with him in opinion.

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When sentence was passed, the prisoner calmly said to his judges, “ You ought not to have dipped your hands in my blood; my faith is the same with that of all true Mussulmen; my doctrine is truly orthodox, and I have always carefully followed the traditions of our forefathers; my writings will incontestably prove this fact. You condemn me from human views; your sentence is unjust! My sole consolation is, that I die innocent; and just heaven will surely revenge my death.”

This pretended criminal was soon executed; and they put him to as painful a death, as if he had committed the most atrocious crimes. They first cruelly scourged him with rods; after which they cut off his arms and legs, and at last his head. The trunk and limbs were forthwith burned, and the ashes thrown into the Tygris. As to the head, it was fixed on the point of a lance, and set up in a publick part of the city.

El Makin relates, that Moctader was favourable to the Christians; and that a governor of Egypt having laid a tax on the bishops, monks, &c. in the year 313, that prince

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Ch. ær. 931.

prince took it off again, and ordered, that they should be suffered to enjoy the immunities which the author of their vocation had granted to them.

The same writer adds, That in the said year 313, there appeared in Egypt a bright radiant star, followed by an immense red flame, which reached from north to south, and appeared to be thirty fathoms long, and about two fathoms broad, wreathed like a serpent.

Rise of the
Dynasty of the
Fatimites.

During the reign of this prince, and about the 298th year of the Hegyra, Abu Mohammed Obeidallah, who may be called the Founder, or at least the forerunner of the Dynasty of the Fatimites, so famous in the mussulman history, established himself in Africa. He claimed to be descended from Ali, the prophet's son-in-law, and in order to gain still greater respect and veneration, he drew his pedigree from Ali, by Fatima, Mahomet's favourite daughter. For which cause, instead of calling himself barely an Alian, he chose rather to assume the name of a Fatimite; a name which was borne by his descendants, and under which they reigned a long time in Africa and Egypt.

The descent of those princes from Ali and Fatima was strongly contested. And Dagebi, an old Arabian author, says that none but ignorant persons would call them Fatimites; and that, far from being descended from so illustrious a stock, he knew, from
undoubted

undoubted authority, that Obeidallah was MOCTADER.
 either one of the Magi, or a Jew by re- Hegyra 319.
 ligion, and a locksmith by profession; and Ch. ær. 931.
 that he had for a long time carried on his
 trade at Salamiah, a town in the district of
 Emessia in Syria.

But however that was, it is certain that
 Obeidallah made a great figure amongst the
 Mussulmen; and that having given himself
 out to be a prophet, he soon gained a great
 number of disciples, whom he put under
 arms, and by whose means he made conquests.
 His first expedition was against the Aglabites,
 so called from Aglab, who having been ap-
 pointed by Haroun governor of the province
 of Africa, found means to make himself ab-
 solute master of the country, and thereto
 to add other conquests; of all which he and
 his posterity had continued to be the sove-
 reigns, from the 184th year of the Hegyra
 to the 298th year of the same, at which
 time Ziadat-Allah, the last prince of that
 Dynasty, was defeated by Obeidallah, and
 deprived of his dominions. The latter main-
 tained his ground against his enemies, and
 transmitted his power to his descendants,
 who after having reigned many years in
 Africa with great tranquillity, conquered
 Egypt from the Akfchidians. Mention will
 often be made of that illustrious family in
 the sequel of this history.

CAHER.

Hegyra 320.

Ch. ær. 932.

C A H E R-B I L L A H.

The THIRTY-EIGHTH CALIPH.

Caher's
wicked dis-
position.

C AHER, third son of Mothaded, who was in prison at the time of his brother's death, was immediately afterwards released, in order to be placed on the throne. This prince was remarkable only on account of his vices. He was capricious and cruel, without honour, without feeling, excessively covetous, and made use of all, even the most barbarous means, to gratify his passion for money. Such is the picture historians have given us of the monster whom the Saracens proclaimed Caliph after Moctader. Happily his reign was short. On account of his crimes he lost his crown, after having worn it about eighteen months; and the miserable life he led from the time of his deprivation, was a just, but too mild a punishment for the wickedness of his reign.

So soon as this prince was in possession of the throne, he gave signal proofs of his avarice and cruelty, by causing a strict enquiry to be made touching all such as had lived with Moctader, that he might take from them the riches they had received from him. He did not even spare his own mother, (who was also mother to the late Caliph,) he caused her to appear before him,
and

and asked her where she had placed her riches? The princess having answered that she had no money, and that her whole property consisted in cloaths and household-furniture; Caher, who firmly believed the contrary, threatened her with the most rigorous treatment, if she did not immediately make a discovery of her money and jewels. And as she still persisted in denying, he commanded that she should be hanged up by the heels in his presence, and was so barbarous as to strike her with his own hands, saying at each blow, "Tell me, where is your money?" The princess continuing steadfastly to affirm that she was not mistress of any, he caused her to be loosed, and sent back to her apartment, where she shortly died.

CAHER.

Hegyra 320.

Ch. ær. 932.

As Caher was determined at all events to get some money from his mother, he resumed all the donations and presents she had made, and moreover caused all her furniture and effects to be publicly sold. The messengers who came to put the infamous order in execution found her alive; but this cruel blow served to hasten her approaching end.

He bestowed the same kind of treatment on the friends and servants of his late brother: the greatest part of them were put to the torture, that they might be forced to give up their substance, which was the only way of avoiding those horrid torments. Even his vizir was not exempt from his fury. He had just nominated to that post a person of great credit
amongst

Hegyra 321.

Ch. ær. 933.

CAHER.

Hegyra 321.

Ch. ær. 933.

amongst the Muffulmen, called Ebn Moclach. He was vizir under the preceding Caliph; but either through caprice of the prince, or court intrigues, he remained only one year in that office, and lived privately till the advancement of Caher, who restored him to his post; and in a short time, for some disgust which is not particularly mentioned, caused his right hand to be cut off, and yet continued him in the same employment.

A conspiracy
formed to de-
pose Caher.

These horrid and repeated cruelties raised the indignation of the people, and particularly of the nobles, who were continually apprehensive, that the savage Caher would deal with them in like manner, in order to seize their estates. A conspiracy was therefore formed by three amongst them to shake off the yoke, and free the state from so oppressive a tyrant.

Munas was one of the first that engaged to revenge the honour of the crown, so scandalously sullied by the avarice and cruelty of the sovereign. Balik, the high chamberlain, joined Munas, and prevailed on his son Ali to engage in the plot. It was thought they might safely impart it to the vizir Moclach, who was very ready to assist in de-throning a prince who had so cruelly used him. The conspirators found means to add to their number Zairac, captain of the palace-guard, who promised them his utmost assistance; and from that moment they looked on themselves as sure of the success of their design.

Zairac

Zairac, without delay, took the most effectual measures to secure all the avenues to the palace, and to prevent any persons from entering there but such as were relations or friends of the conspirators ; but the very day on which the blow was to be struck, whereby the Caliph was to be deprived of his crown, the whole plot was discovered to him by a Mussulman called Taharif, who had overheard all that passed at the last conference held by Munas and his party. He disguised himself in female attire, and found means to slip into the palace, and to get into Caher's apartment. He revealed to him the names of the chief conspirators, and advised him without delay to be on his guard, for that the storm would burst on that very day after evening-prayer ; and that Ali, the son of Balik, would appear the first to seize him.

CAHER.

Hegyra 321.
Ch. ær. 933.The Caliph
discovers the
plot, and pre-
vents it.

The Caliph, who began already to be apprehensive of some uncommon event by the stir he observed amongst his guards, made no doubt of the truth of Taharif's story ; he therefore directed him instantly to apply to the family of Saïd, to inform them of his dangerous situation, and to order them to send him speedy assistance : he at the same time pointed out a private way, by which the succour might safely come to him, if they took due precaution to avoid the guards who were posted near it.

CAHER.

Hegyra 321.

Ch. ær. 933.

Taharif complied with the Caliph's orders, and all things seemed happily to conspire in his defence. The house of Saïd provided themselves with short weapons which they concealed under their garments, and entered the palace by the way the Caliph had pointed out. That prince placed them in different apartments, and ordered them to remain concealed, until they should receive further orders from him.

So soon as evening-prayer was over, Ali ben Balik went to the palace, and offered to go to the Caliph, but he was denied entrance into his apartment. He began to quarrel with the door-keepers, relying upon being supported, in case of need, by the very guards whose commandant was in the plot ; but to his great surprize, some of the Saïd's appeared with arms, who seized him, and placed him in a room, under a proper guard.

The conspirators impatiently waited for news of Ali's enterprize; but they could hear none, except that he had at first been denied admision to the Caliph, and that they had afterwards permitted him to enter.

This account had a different effect upon the conspirators. Moclach imagining the plot was discovered, instantly provided for his own safety, and made his escape. Balik, on the contrary, who did not in the least suspect it, and whose thoughts were turned only on the insult committed on his son,

son, in denying him entrance into the apart-^{CAHER.}
ments, went to the palace to complain of it : ^{Hegyra 321.}
he was admitted to the Caliph's presence, ^{Ch. ær. 933.}
and was there apprehended.

Upon this Caher immediately sent one of his attendants to Munas, desiring his speedy presence about an affair of importance, in which he wanted his advice. Munas made some difficulty to comply, and with good reason ; but, in all probability, he was ignorant that the Saïds were in possession of the interior part of the palace: however, being earnestly intreated by the messenger, he yielded, and went with him. He crossed the apartments till he came to that of the Caliph ; and so soon as the door was opened, Caher advanced to meet him, and seizing him by the garment, commanded such of the Saïds as were at hand to apprehend him, and keep him close prisoner.

The Caliph then going into another room, commanded that the head of Ali should be instantly brought him in a dish. His commands having been obeyed on the spot, the Caliph took the dish, and entering the room where Balik was guarded, he placed the head of his son on a table near him, and going out told him, that if he did not know whose it was, he would give him a little time to discover it. How shocking a sight must this be to a father? and how fatal a presage to Balik himself? And indeed his fate was soon decided. The Caliph having afforded

CAHER.

Hegyra 321.

Ch. ær. 933.

him a short space to view the head of his dear son, commanded the father's head to be also cut off and placed in the same dish, which he ordered to be brought to him. So soon as this was done, he again took the dish, carried it to the room where Munas was in custody, and set it before him. The eunuch shuddering at so horrid a sight, cried out, "May the curse of God light on the author of such barbarity!" The Caliph did not give him time to say any more; he caused his head to be cut off, and put in the same dish with the two others. On the next day each of the heads was fixed on the point of a lance, and carried through all the streets of Bagdat, preceded by the common cryer, who from time to time said with a loud voice, "Behold the reward of those that have broken their oath made to the Caliph, and who have endeavoured to raise disturbances in the state."

The Caliph's
cruelty to
Abu Ahmet.

These bloody executions being over, Caher entertained not the least fear of any future cabals, and gave a loose to his cruel disposition. He caused the prince to be seized, who, according to common report, was to have supplied his place if the plot had succeeded: it was his own nephew Abu Ahmet, son of the Caliph Moktaphi. He caused him to be brought before him, and having carried him to a place called the Haram, which is the most private part of the Seraglio, he commanded his attendants to seize him, and

and nail him up against one of the partitions CAHER.
 with four large nails which he had caused Hegyra 321.
 to be made for that purpose. Ch. æt. 933.

Whilst the unhappy Ahmet* was ex- He extorts a
 piring, Caher sent for Abu Jahia, a lawyer sum of money
 of great repute, and who was deemed to be from Jahia.
 very rich. So soon as he appeared, the Ca-
 liph told him he stood in great need of the
 sum of two hundred thousand denarii, and
 that he must desire him to advance the mo-
 ney forthwith.

Jahia pleading his inability of furnishing
 so large a sum, the Caliph interrupted him,
 and said, "How is this? Abu Ahmet, who is
 in the next room, assured me you were able to
 lend the money, and is of opinion you should
 do so: go with me to him," added Caher,
 taking the lawyer by the hand. It may be
 easily imagined to how great a degree Jahia
 was terrified, to see even the Caliph's ne-
 phew expiring under so uncommon a pu-
 nishment. He foresaw that if he continued
 to refuse a compliance with that prince's de-
 mand, he must share the same fate; he
 therefore promised, that he would strip him-
 self of every thing to make up the sum in
 question.

* El Makin speaking of Ahmet, only says that he was
 confined in a room, the door whereof the Caliph caused to
 be walled up, and in which he suffered that young prince
 to die of hunger. Kondemir says almost the same thing.

CAHER.

Hegyra 322.

Ch. ær. 934.

Moclach forms
a new conspi-
racy against
the Caliph.

This was the last barbarous deed the Caliph executed. The vizir Moclach, who had concealed himself ever since the discovery of the last plot, thirsted after a more favourable opportunity of revenging himself on the tyrant; and when he considered the hate and fury which had arisen in the minds of all men on account of the cruel death of Ahmet, he thought a better occasion could not offer.

The nobility and great men of the state also murmured loudly. A general discontent appeared, and nothing but a chief seemed wanting to excite a revolt.

Moclach undertook to carry it into execution: however, he dared not yet make his appearance; but as he was a man full of artifice and cunning, he, though absent, so well managed the design that it was attended with success. He strove to intimidate Sima, commander of the Turkish militia, by causing it to be insinuated to him, that considering the sanguinary disposition of the Caliph, he had reason to fear his own safety. Sima was sensible of the truth of that observation, and conferred on this head with other officers, who were filled with the same apprehensions. They earnestly required, that previous to any attempt a conference should be held with Moclach, who consented, proper security having been first given to him; and after a few conferences, it was agreed that

that Caher should be deposed; which was CAHER.
 to be brought about in the following man- Hegyra 322.
 ner: as the pay of the troops was in arrear, Ch. ær. 934.
 the soldiers were to demand the money with
 loud cries, and without waiting for any an-
 swer from court, the officers and soldiers
 were to ascend to the Caliph's apartment,
 and drag him thence, in order to put him in
 prison, after which a successor was to be ap-
 pointed.

The event of this plot was successful to
 the conspirators. The soldiers having made
 the clamour agreed on, the officers, who
 only waited for that signal, instantly went
 to the Caliph's apartment, with some troops.
 Caher having enquired into the cause of the
 disturbance, was informed it was a revolt,
 which he could not possibly guard against,
 because the conspirators were already in
 possession of the palace. The Caliph ran with
 the utmost speed through a gallery which
 led to a bath; and finding that the conspira-
 tors broke open the doors, and searched
 all the chambers, he found means to get
 on the roof of the bath, and there concealed
 himself; but his pursuers sought after him
 so diligently, that they discovered him.

They got out on the roof and seized him;
 and whether it was accidentally done in the Caher is de-
 hurry, or whether the thing had been so posed, and re-
 resolved, they put out his eyes. He was duced to the
 then carried to prison, whence he was not utmost misery.

CAHER.

Hegyra 322.

Ch. ær. 934.

enlarged till after the election of another Caliph. They appointed for him an apartment in the palace, of which he was soon deprived, without any revenue settled for his maintenance. And in short this wretched prince was reduced to a necessity of begging his bread at the doors of the Mosques. El-Makin cites an author (without naming him) who had seen Caher in that miserable condition: "Being once at Almanzor's mosque," says he, "on a Friday, I saw a man brought thither cloathed in a robe with a double furr, which was much worn, and I heard him say: Remember him who was once your Caliph, and who now begs your charity." A strange revolution, by which that prince was punished for his crimes in a more grievous manner, than if they had deprived him of his life instead of his sight and crown.

He lived thus miserably till the 339th year of the Hegyra, when he died at Bagdat, aged fifty two years, of which he had reigned about eighteen months.

The family of the Buians, or Bouians, so famous in eastern story, was first known during the reign of this Caliph. Those princes were called Buians from Buiah, the head of that house. He was the son of Kaba Khofru, who claimed his descent from the monarchs of the fourth Dynasty of the Persians, who were called Saffanites, from Saffan first prince

prince of that Dynasty, of which was the famous Chosroës.

CAHER.

Hegyra 323.

Ch. ær. 934.

Although Buiah pretended to be derived from so illustrious a stock, yet he was so unprovided of the favours of fortune, that he lived very privately in a village in the country of Dilem, which lies along the southern coast of the Caspian sea, from whence his posterity were also called Dilemites. Buiah exercised the business of a fisherman, and passed his days with his wife and family in great penury. His wife happening to die, he left the village, and went with his children to the house of one of his friends called Schéhériar ebn Rostam; where he resided for some time.

In this abode Buiah had a very extraordinary dream. He thought he saw a great flame issue out of his belly, which having in a short time covered a vast extent of country, suddenly arose up to the heavens, and divided itself into three parts; and he at the same time saw the people of the earth fall prostrate before the three fires, and beg their protection.

Being uneasy to know the meaning of so wonderful a dream, Buiah consulted an astrologer who passed for a very great adept in the interpretation of dreams. The astrologer having mused a while, said to Buiah, "You have three sons, who will all become sovereign princes: their power will be great, and

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Hegyra 323.

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and spread over the earth in like manner as you saw in your dream."

Buiah, amazed at a prediction which suited so ill with his wretched condition, thought the astrologer had jested with him; but the latter undeceived him, by continuing his discourse in the following terms: "You may depend on what I say; and if you can tell me the hour in which your children were severally born, I will likewise inform you of many other particulars." Buiah satisfied him, and at the same time brought his three children before him; having calculated their nativity, and maturely considered his scheme, he saluted the eldest called Ali, and taking him by the hand, kissed it, and said to his father, "This is he that will be the first monarch." He in like manner saluted the second named Hassan; and the third called Ahmed, and said to their father, "These two will also have a share in the sovereignty."

The three brothers immediately resolved to take up arms, as the only means of verifying the prediction, and went into the service of Macan, king of the province of Ghilan in Persia. They began to distinguish themselves at the time when Macan having lost a battle against a prince called Asfar, was on a sudden deprived of his dominions by the conqueror. The sons of Buiah instantly abandoned Macan, and took on amongst the

the troops of Asfar; and he having been CAHER. slain by a Karmathian in the 315th year of Hegyra 323. the Hegyra, Mardawigius, a prince famous Ch. ær. 934- both for his valour and ambition, seized with a strong hand the province of Ghilan, and at the same time made a conquest of Dilem, Mazanderan, and Tabarestan. The sons of Buiah soon made an offer of their swords to that prince, who having heard of their bravery, readily employed them in his army, and speedily advanced them; and they were appointed to superior commands in the expeditions which that prince undertook for the conquest of the provinces of Irak, Fars, and Southern Persia. But Mardawigius having been killed at Ispahan by one of his old slaves, called Jakem the Turk, and leaving no children, Ali, the eldest of the three Buian brothers, who was then at the head of a victorious army, easily made himself master of Persia: these were the first steps which enabled those brothers to found that famous Dynasty, so well known in history by the name of the Buian Dynasty. It was at first divided into three branches, and afterwards became only two, the princes whereof, for the most part, reigned jointly at the same time.

Those three princes are commonly known only by the surnames which were given to them. Ali was called Amadeddulat; Hassan, Rokneddulat; and Ahmed, Moëzeddulat.

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dulat. They were all great favourers of the sect of Ali, probably because the first sovereign of their family was called Ali. We shall soon see them extend their power even to Bagdat, and despotically govern both the person and empire of the Caliphs, to whom they left only the bare shew of authority.

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